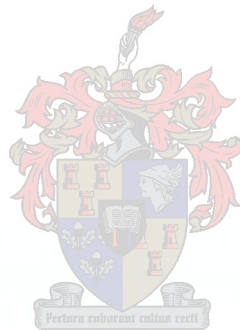


***History and Power:  
an investigation of identity and re-presentation***

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***Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts in the subject Fine Arts  
at the University of Stellenbosch***

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***April 2005***

***Declaration***

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

Signature:

Date:

***Abstract***

This investigation acts on the assumption that Knowledge is a means by which reality is represented to us through power relations. As a represented reality, Knowledge on its part reconstructs an exclusive reality which pertains solely to the interests of those in power. Knowledge therefore comprises a fixed meaning – constituted from words and images (or texts) represented with a disregard for their relevant con[text]s. Yet my work – as a re-presentation of the past – confronts the [Hi]story represented by the Apartheid Regime and a reading/viewing of my books re-w[rite]s this slanted Narrative. By means of juxtaposition or through re-presenting texts in con[text]s different from those with which they are traditionally associated, a reading/viewing of my work creates relationships of inter-dependence. Through the reciprocal movement inevitably coinciding with such a reading/viewing, a process of redemption takes place as the reader is dis-placed and meaning shifted from one level to an[other].

## **Opsomming**

Hierdie ondersoek gaan uit van die veronderstelling dat Kennis 'n medium is waardeur die realiteit aan ons voorgestel word deur magsverhoudings. As 'n voorgestelde realiteit, rekonstrueer Kennis derhalwe 'n eksklusiewe realiteit wat alleenlik betrekking het op die belange van die bemagtigdes. Kennis bestaan gevolglik uit 'n afgehandelde betekenis – saamgestel uit woorde en beelde (of tekste) wat voorgestel word met 'n verontagsaming van hulle toepaslike kontekste. Tog konfronteer my werk – as 'n her-voorstelling van die verlede – die Geskiedenis voorgestel deur die Apartheidsbewind en her-skryf die lees/kyk van my boeke hierdie bevooroordeelde Narratief. Deur middel van jukstaposisie of deur tekste her-voor te stel in ander kontekste as dié waarmee hulle tradisioneel geassosieer word, skep die lees/kyk van my werk inter-afhanklike verhoudings. Deur die wederkerige beweging wat noodwendig met so 'n lees/kyk saamval, vind 'n proses van verlossing deur herstelling plaas terwyl die leser ver-plaas en betekenis ver-skuif word van een vlak na 'n ander.



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## ***Preface***

This thesis constitutes one of two complementary components which together comprise the MA (FA) degree. The other component is constituted by a practical, visual investigation. The thesis explores the theoretical con[text] or framework for my visual research. By means of this exploration, my practical research is analysed and theoretically con[text]ualised, as well as the symbiosis between the theoretical and the practical components emphasised, as meaning is ascribed to the one in terms of the other.

With reference to the theoretical questions and problems that arose from and were encountered during the practical research, this thesis investigates the notions of image and text, as well as the nature of the relationship between the two notions. As those elements which comprise representations, image and text constitute knowledge and therefore also our perspective on the past, our perception of reality, of ourselves and of others.

Born in 1977, my experience of Apartheid (whether as an era, an Ideology or a Regime) was largely mediated by institutions such as the school and the Dutch Reformed Church. These institutions represented their respective bodies of Knowledge as copies, duplications or reflections of reality – in other words, as Truth. However, as the first free elections in 1994 – along with the numerous events preceding and following them – coincided with the emergence of various small and personalised narratives contradicting the Apartheid History, this Narrative was revealed instead as a means by which to preserve the Apartheid Ideology at the expense of other, different ideologies. Hence, my work is not only a symbolical confrontation with the slanted Apartheid History, but also an endeavour to receive the fullness of this past by remembering the 'other', by establishing dialogue



between disparates and by levelling differences in order to ultimately create the opportunity for redemption.

In accordance with the process of redemption, which rests on the principles of inter-action, movement, dis-placement, change and trans-formation, this study rests on principles pertaining to the deconstructive method. Also familiar as a post-structuralist phenomenon, deconstruction entails the analysis of texts based on the ideas that language is inherently unstable and shifting and that the reader rather than the author determines meaning. Since meaning is accordingly a product of a play of differences in a text within a con[text],<sup>1</sup> both the process of redemption and meaning as pertaining to the deconstructive method are revealed to occur or to be created within or with regard to some form of relationship, and to coincide with movement and change.

Consistent with the notion of inter-action as inherent both in the process of redemption and in the deconstructive methodology, this thesis is written in English. Not only is the Afrikaner identity hereby defined in terms of the 'other', but the ideas of closure, mastery and dominance are simultaneously opposed. At a certain stage, reference is also made to the Spanish translation of a particular word in order to facilitate the lucid communication of the related concept. Despite the fact that I am an Afrikaner woman, these gestures by no means denote a rejection, disowning or denial of the Afrikaner culture, but instead they re-present an endeavour to symbolically establish movement towards those ideologies different from or other than this previously centralised Ideology.

The use of etymology throughout this dissertation takes the reader on various journeys from language to language, while at the same time dis-placing [he]r from the present to the past. Yet, although the respective terms often appear to be contradicted by their so-called origins, connections are established and meaning is

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<sup>1</sup> See Johan Degenaar: *Art and the meaning of life* (1987:100).

created because of the reciprocal movement which occurs within these relationships of difference.

The female pronoun does not signify the re-presentation of a female as opposed to a male stance. Instead, it re-presents those deviating from what was considered to be the norm (white, male and Afrikaans) within the con[text] of Apartheid South Africa. Not only is this past hereby confronted and notions of centralisation opposed, but the opportunity for dialogue is simultaneously created.

My use of the visual character of words to indicate meaning corresponds with the central theme of this investigation, which focuses on the dialectical relationship between image and text. Consistent with the deconstructive methodology, a critical stance towards the concept of logocentrism is hereby also conveyed. Logocentrism refers to the misleading sense of the mastery of concept over language. According to this line of thought, language is subservient to concepts and a mere vehicle by means of which to express ideas assumed to exist independently of language. Conversely, language is primary to deconstruction, as meaning is not considered to precede it, but instead to be produced by it. As language has both a textual and a material character, the deconstructive method is furthermore also critical of phonocentrism, which privileges speech over writing – based on the wrong assumption that speech directly expresses meaning and that writing merely copies speech.<sup>2</sup>

Besides my use of italics to differentiate visually between foreign terms – as well as dictionary references – and the text within which these terms and references appear, it is also a means of emphasising a particular concept or of juxtaposing ideas in order to reveal connections, differences or similarities between them. In addition, capital letters denote power relations and are hence indications of both domination and subjugation with regard to the concepts at hand in the relevant discussions. My use of square brackets to accentuate particular syllables or words within words,

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<sup>2</sup> See Johan Degenaar: *Art and the meaning of life* (1987:92,93).



stimulates an alternative reading of familiar terms and ideas. While the brackets emphasise certain characteristics pertaining to specific syllables, words or concepts, they also highlight the dual nature of terms and/or ideas. Connections between disparates are hereby established, which either form unusual relationships or reveal contradictions or deception, depending on the con[text]. Lastly, the hyphen is applied as a means to signify movement, change and/or dis-placement – thereby acknowledging mediation and denoting inter-action.

I feel indebted to acknowledge the research which Marthie Kaden has done with regard to her Master's thesis entitled 'Herinnering, geskiedenis, identiteit: 'n ondersoek na beeld en teks in mito-poësis' (2002). I have benefited tremendously from the bibliography which she compiled. In addition, I give her the credit for the parallel drawn between the movement of the body on the terrain/land and that of the gesture of the hand on paper – deliberated in Chapter Two of this thesis.

I regard the application of the theory to my work, as well as the discussions on my practical work as becoming less forced and more successful towards the end of the thesis. This improvement can be ascribed to the progress which took place in my practical work.

My sincere appreciation goes to Prof. Keith Dietrich for his valuable input on numerous occasions, for his true interest in my intellectual pursuits, and above all for his contagious passion for knowledge.

Marthie Kaden's supervision for the duration of this degree has been a mere extension of several years of utterly proficient guidance. Furthermore, as both a patient, dynamic mentor and a treasured friend, she not only served as an inexhaustible source of encouragement, support and zeal, but also as a spirited source of inspiration.

I also owe my family and in particular my parents a great debt of gratitude. Their unconditional love and support provided me with inexplicable strength, self-confidence and determination. Largely because of them, could I pursue this journey.



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## ***Introduction***

### ***Aim of the investigation***

This study focuses on Knowledge as a means by which reality is represented to us through power relations. My aim is to indicate how Knowledge – as a represented reality – on its part reconstructs an exclusive reality which pertains solely to the interests, values and beliefs of those in power. I will consequently show that Knowledge comprises a fixed meaning – constituted from words and images (or texts) represented with a disregard for their relevant con[text]s. Yet the main purpose of this investigation is to indicate not only how my work – as a representation of the past – confronts the [Hi]story represented by the Apartheid Regime, but also how a reading/viewing of my books re-w[rite]s this slanted Narrative. By means of juxtaposition or through re-presenting texts in con[text]s different from those with which they are traditionally associated, a reading/viewing of my work creates relationships of inter-dependence, establishes dialogue between disparates, levels differences and remembers the other. Through the reciprocal movement or inter-action inevitably coinciding with such a reading/viewing, a process of redemption takes place as the reader is dis-placed and meaning shifted from one level to an[other]. Thus the notion of movement forms a crucial part of this investigation.

### ***General orientation***

The Apartheid Regime enforced its allegedly universal Ideology by means of institutions such as the school and the Dutch Reformed Church. This was partly achieved by depicting those events which pertained to the interests of the Afrikaner

as facts in [Hi]story textbooks. Naturally, these events were also portrayed from his perspective: Republic Day, Kruger Day, The Great Trek and the Battle of Blood River, to name but a few. In addition, the dogma of the Dutch Reformed Church represented this perspective as sovereign. The bodies of Knowledge as peculiar to their respective institutions, were hence represented as copies, duplications or reflections of reality. In this con[text], the Afrikaner became centralised and his customs, values and beliefs preserved *at the expense of* those different from or other than him.

The unbanning of the African National Congress and the release of Nelson Mandela from prison at the beginning of 1990, the first free elections in 1994, and the revelations to which South Africans were exposed during the course of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission caused a disruption in the supposed South African history, which was to be revealed as an Apartheid Narrative. The emergence of various narratives – often small and personalised – not only confronted the Apartheid [Hi]story, but also exposed the particular notions of Truth and Knowledge to be formations of power. The Afrikaner became de-centralised and hence was obliged to re-define his identity *in terms of* the 'other'.

### *Problem setting*

In *At memory's edge: after-images of the Holocaust in contemporary art and architecture* (c2000:2), James E. Young argues that a generation which is born after a particular history into the time of its memory only, is unable to recall this history separately from the ways it has been passed down:

[T]his generation of artists intuitively grasp its inability to know the history of the Holocaust outside of the ways it has been passed down, but it sees history itself as a composite record of both events *and* these events' transmission to the next generation ... [I]n addition to the facts of Holocaust history, these artists recognize the further facts surrounding this history's transmission to them, that its history is being passed down to them in particular times and places. These are not mutually exclusive claims or competing sets of facts but part of history's reality.



With regard to the notion of narrative representation and in accordance with Young, Linda Hutcheon states in *The politics of postmodernism* (1989:76) that *all* historical narrative is characterised by the events represented in the narrative, as well as by the act of narration itself. From this perspective, 'facts' cannot be separated from the acts of interpretation and narration as they are created in and by those acts. That which actually becomes 'fact' is therefore indissolubly bound to the social and cultural con[text] of the historian.

Hutcheon (1989:74) further considers 'facts' to be formations of power:

[I]nterpretation enters the domain of historiographic representation (in the choice of narrative strategy, explanatory paradigm, or *ideological encoding*) to *condition* any notion of history as objective representation of past events, rather than as interpretive representation of those past events, which are given meaning (as historical facts) by the very discourse of the historian (*italics mine*).

Besides the domain of historiographic representation, all cultural forms of representation – literary, visual, aural – inevitably take place within a particular con[text]. From this perspective, these cannot possibly avoid involvement with social and political relations and apparatuses. All forms of representation are hence ideologically grounded, or, stated differently, all representations are formations of power. (Burgin in Hutcheon 1989:3.)

My experience of Apartheid [Hi]story was largely mediated by institutions. Yet, as these institutions contributed to the preservation of the Apartheid Ideology, the relations between them and their respective bodies of Knowledge were characterised by power. The particular [Hi]story presented by the institutions was consequently a production of power and constituted a biased, slanted Narrative. My knowledge of this [Hi]story is therefore not only fragmented, but also one-sided and misleading.

It is clear that the notion of power is inherent in representation – that it is embedded in the intended purpose, as well as in the structuring of depictions. The possibility of

trans-forming representation to a means of redemption (instead of domination), accordingly depends on the purpose and the structuring of a relevant depiction.

### *Nature and scope of the study*

This investigation concentrates on the theoretical con[te]xtualisation of my own practical research. Throughout the study, the discussions on my work are related to theoretical concepts. The discussions are therefore not restricted to critical analyses, but also emphasise the symbiotic relationship between the theoretical and the practical, between discourse and picture, or between word and image.

My re-presentation of the past as a means to re-write [Hi]story and hence re-construct reality is substantiated by the work of Michel Foucault, W.J.T. Mitchell and Jacques Derrida. Foucault maintains that Knowledge and power mutually implicate each other, while Mitchell holds the perspective that the relationship between words and images has meaning beyond the realm of representation – that it reflects the relations we posit between symbols and the world or between signs and their meanings. In addition, Derrida considers meaning to be that which characterises the relationship between a text and a particular con[te]xt.

Michel Foucault's view that Knowledge not only reflects (or represents) a particular reality, but by means of this selective reflection also reconstructs a slanted reality, supports the approach of this study that Knowledge and power are involved in a symbiotic relationship.

Power is not to be read ... in terms of one individual's domination over another or others; or even as that of one class over another or others; for the subject which power has *constituted* becomes part of the mechanisms of power. It becomes the vehicle of that power which, in turn, has constituted it as that type of vehicle. Power is both reflexive, then, and impersonal. It acts in a relatively autonomous way and produces subjects just as much as, or even more than, subjects reproduce it. The point is not to ignore the subject or to deny its existence ... but rather to examine *subjection*, the processes of the construction of subjects in and as a collection of



techniques or flows of power which run through the whole of a particular social body (McHoul & Grace 1997:22).

According to Foucault, power is not an entity, but a relationship. Knowledge is the product of such a relationship between a political power and its institutions. From this perspective, Knowledge is not only a construction, but the meaning ascribed to Knowledge is also restricted to the con[text] within which it was constructed. Yet such bodies of Knowledge – or discourses – are represented by the political power involved as constituting Truth, thereby lawfully enforcing obedience and subjection to the Ideology pertaining to the relevant political power.<sup>3</sup>

This investigation is further moulded in accordance with W.J.T. Mitchell's view that the relationship between image and text (or between pictures and discourse) reflects reality as it pertains to a particular society.

What are we to make of this contest between the interests of verbal and pictorial representation? I propose that we historicize it, and treat it, not as a matter for peaceful settlement under the terms of some all-embracing theory of signs, but as a struggle that carries the fundamental contradictions of our culture into the heart of theoretical discourse itself. The point, then, is not to heal the split between words and images, but to see what interests and powers it serves (Mitchell 1986:44).

In *Picture theory: essays on verbal and visual representation* (1994b:91), Mitchell has a similar argument:

The real question to ask when confronted with ... image-text relations is not 'what is the difference (or similarity) between the words and the images?' but 'what difference do the differences (and similarities) make?' That is, why does it matter how words and images are juxtaposed, blended, or separated?

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<sup>3</sup> See Alec McHoul and Wendy Grace, *A Foucault primer: discourse, power and the subject* (1997) and Michel Foucault *Power/knowledge: selected interviews and other writings, 1972-1977* (1980), edited by Colin Gordon.

Mitchell holds the perspective that both images and texts, since the moment of their conception, are composite, synthetic works or concepts – works or concepts that combine image and text, or pictures and discourse. Yet the relationship between image and text is characterised by a gap. This ‘gap’, in other words the notion of images and texts existing autonomously – images as images and texts as texts – can thus be identified instead as an Ideology.<sup>4</sup>

This study also supports the deconstructive method according to which meaning is a product of a play of differences in a text within a con[text]. As con[text]s – or the innumerable texts which surround a particular text – inevitably change, no stable identity can be ascribed to the text. Jacques Derrida (in Degenaar 1987a:98) states that

[a] text ... is henceforth no longer a finished corpus of writing, some content enclosed in a book or its margins, but a differential network, a fabric of traces referring endlessly to something other than itself, to other differential traces. Thus the text overruns all the limits assigned to it so far ...

As the notions of movement and change are thus intrinsic to meaning, these concepts form an integral part of this investigation. Conversely, ideas of stability, finality and centrality denote power relations or domination.

In Chapter One I focus on the role that History and Power play in the perception we have of ourselves and of others. I thus indicate that the past is always mediated by representations which are presented as reflections, copies or duplications – in other words, by representations which are presented as powerless. I therefore mainly rely on the theories of Foucault who maintains that Knowledge is a means by which reality is represented to us through power relations in order to reconstruct a selective reality. His stance is also clearly reflected in the work of Linda Hutcheon, Hannah Arendt and Johan Degenaar. In *The politics of postmodernism* (1989), Hutcheon

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<sup>4</sup> See W.J.T. Mitchell *Iconology: image, text, ideology* (1986), *Picture theory: essays on verbal and visual representation* (1994b), as well as *Landscape and power* (1994a).



holds the perspective that any representation is informed by ideological values and interests. Consistent with Hutcheon's approach, Hannah Arendt (1970) links the notions of history, tradition and authority, and associates tradition with the systematic and chronological ordering of the past.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, with reference to the article 'Myth and the collision of cultures' (Degenaar 1995), reason and repetition are revealed as modes through which selected customs and beliefs are preserved at the expense of other systems of values. In this chapter the idea of genealogy (as deliberated by Foucault)<sup>6</sup> is also linked with my own work, which, as a representation of the past, investigates the disguised or disqualified historical contents. The terms 'abrasion' and 'tmesis' as used by Roland Barthes in *The pleasure of the text* (1975), are incorporated because of their reference to the inter-action with and interference of a text.

In Chapter Two I consider landscape representation with reference to the idea of movement. Consistent with the deconstructive method, this investigation acts on the assumption that movement and change are linked with inter-action and meaning. Conversely, limited or restricted movement is linked with power relations, dominance and a fixed meaning. Moreover, the study is aligned with the theories of W.J.T. Mitchell as deliberated in *Landscape and power* (1994), as well as with those of Denis E. Cosgrove in *Social formation and symbolic landscape* (c1984). Mitchell holds the perspective not only that the landscape itself is already a representation in its own right, but also that the landscape is a source of personal and social identities – a cultural practice. In accordance with Mitchell, Cosgrove maintains that the landscape idea represents a way of seeing which extends well beyond the use and perception of the land to other areas of cultural practice.

The investigation is undertaken by distinguishing between those marks created on the terrain/land through bodily movement as opposed to those created by a gesture of the hand on paper, and by distinguishing between the reading of naturalised

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<sup>5</sup> See the introduction to Walter Benjamin's *Illuminations* (1970).

<sup>6</sup> See Michel Foucault *Power/knowledge: selected interviews and other writings, 1972-1977* (1980), edited by Colin Gordon, and 'Nietzsche, genealogy, history', in *The Foucault reader* (1991:76-100).



landscape depictions as opposed to that of my own work as re-presentation. I will consequently indicate that bodily movement and hence the marks it creates on the land derive from and therefore refer to either a politically centralised or a politically marginalised position. Alternatively, with regard to Serge Tisseron's article 'All writing is drawing: the spatial development of the manuscript' (c1994), I will show that gesture – as the movement intrinsic to drawing – stems from the psychological need to re-construct maternal symbiosis. Lastly, with reference to Ann Bermingham's paper 'System, order, and abstraction: the politics of English landscape drawing around 1795' (1994), a distinction will be drawn between the notion of naturalisation and my own work: naturalisation as a process in which mediation is concealed and power relations established, and my work as instigating inter-action and inter-readings.

In Chapter Three my investigation is aligned with W.J.T. Mitchell's theories which indicate that images and texts (or pictures and discourse) are contained within each other, although, owing to power relations, the relationship between the two notions is characterised by a gap. Mitchell hereby maintains that the nature of the relationship between image and text not only pertains to the realm of representation, but is also connected with ideological ideas.

In accordance with Mitchell's line of thought, this study further corresponds with Daniel Dorling and David Fairbairn's stance in *Mapping: ways of representing the world* (1997). Dorling and Fairbairn hold the perspective that traditional maps not only depict physical features relating to the surface of the earth, but also constitute political artefacts. Conversely, as deliberated by Walter Benjamin in *Illuminations* (1970), the dialectical relationship of, or inter-action between image (or text) and con[text], is inherent in the very nature of the story, referring either to a particular re-telling with succeeding and gradually changing events, or to the product of a collection of re-tellings. With reference to Claude Gandelman's *Reading pictures, viewing texts* (c1991), I will indicate that the simultaneous reading and viewing of my work opposes relationships of dominance, identifies differences and similarities, and establishes connections and movement which shift or dis-place meaning from one level to an[other].



Power relations, dominance and a fixed meaning, or otherwise relations of interdependence, inter-action and meaning, are established, depending on the structure by which a particular depiction (as a construction) is characterised. Owing to the disruption of systematically and chronologically ordered texts and to the ensuing disorder and juxtaposition of disparates, a viewer/reader is obliged to *move in between* the supposedly chaotic texts in order to *create* meaning. Furthermore, power relations and notions of restriction and delimitation are opposed, and redemption, change and trans-formation instigated, as a text is defined *in terms of* those other than or different from it.

## **Chapter One**

### ***History and Power***

History ... is constructed through language, for language establishes the categories within which we apprehend the past. The issue is not just who has the power to speak but who shapes the structure of the discourse (Patrick H. Hutton c1993:122).

Knowing the past becomes a question of representing, that is, of constructing and interpreting, not of objective recording (Linda Hutcheon 1989:74).

I was born in 1977. My experience of Apartheid – whether as an era, an Ideology or a Regime – was a largely mediated one. The mediation mainly occurred by means of institutions such as the school and the Dutch Reformed Church. In this chapter, I will investigate the nature of the relationship between these institutions and the Apartheid Regime concomitant with its Ideology. By using the theories of Michel Foucault, I will indicate that institutions and language preserve the unspoken warfare of political power. In addition, it will be shown that the relations between institutions and their respective bodies of knowledge are characterised by power. From this perspective, the History presented by the Apartheid Regime will be exposed as a biased, partial Narrative comprising particular events which were represented as facts. Yet the main purpose of this chapter is to present a motivation for my own work and to indicate in which way my work – as a re-presentation of the past – not only confronts the slanted Apartheid History, but also remembers the ‘other’, levels differences, establishes dialogue between disparates and creates the possibility of redemption.



History as a re-presentation<sup>7</sup> of the past is deprived of the 'natural' coherence and continuity with which it is traditionally<sup>8</sup> associated. The notion of re-presentation acknowledges that complex processes of mediation involve tellers, narrators or historians who construct the very facts of history 'by giving a particular meaning to events' (Hutcheon 1989:58). In the context of history as re-presentation, historical facts merely become those 'events' chosen to be narrated. From this perspective, all past 'events' are therefore potential 'facts'. (1989:75.)

The 'familiar narrative form of beginning, middle, and end' is believed to impart meaning and order through its structuring process (Hutcheon 1989:62). Yet meaning created in this way is problematic in the sense that it is dependant upon closure and finality. According to deconstruction, '[m]eaning is said to be determinable in a context but the context does not permit saturation' (Degenaar 1987a:100). Historical 'facts' can therefore not be governed by any 'archè or telos, origin or final cause', as contexts continually change (Culler in Degenaar 1987a:90).

The processes by which facts are constructed and ordered are not of an innocent nature. Linda Hutcheon states in *The politics of postmodernism* (1989:58) that '[t]he past is something with which we must come to terms and such a confrontation involves an acknowledgement of limitation as well as power'. We are limited insofar as we have access only to fragments of the past, available as traces present in documentation and in the testimony of witnesses (1989:58). Facts and knowledge are further complicated by the permeation of power. Power and knowledge are believed to be directly connected with each other. According to Michel Foucault in

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<sup>7</sup> According to *The concise Oxford dictionary* (1995, s.v. 're-') the Latin root of the prefix 're-' refers to the words *again* and *back*. In this context, where history is defined as a re-presentation of the past, *again* and *back* convey a continuous reciprocal movement between the past and the present. I regard this back-and-forth movement as coinciding with the notion of deconstruction. This notion is critical of a 'spatial configuration in which past and future are concentrated in the present which takes on the character of an eternal present' (Degenaar 1987a:91).

<sup>8</sup> In addition to the use of the term 'tradition' in the section entitled 'Tradition and Authority', the word 'traditionally' is occasionally used in the remainder of this chapter. My use of the term is intended to be consistent with the definition of the word 'tradition', as explained in *The concise Oxford dictionary* (1995, s.v. 'tradition'): *a custom, opinion, or belief handed down to posterity esp. orally or by practice*. Alternatively put, I have used the term in situations where I have regarded the relevant custom, opinion, or belief as peculiar to the Afrikaans culture as I am familiar with it.

*Discourse, power and the subject* (McHoul & Grace 1997:59), 'there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations'. From this perspective, the supposed facts which constitute history are those events supporting the interests of the people in power.

### *Tradition and Authority*

In the 'Introduction' of *Illuminations* (1970:38), Hannah Arendt writes that '[i]nsofar as the past has been transmitted as tradition, it possesses authority; insofar as authority presents itself historically, it becomes tradition'. The past therefore possesses authority to the degree in which it appears to be ordered – both chronologically and systematically. Authority on its part becomes tradition if it presents itself as the norm. History, tradition and authority consequently comprise an intricate and potentially powerful network.

Arendt (1970:44) describes the notion of tradition in terms of systematic and chronological ordering:

For tradition puts the past in order, not just chronologically but first of all systematically in that it separates the positive from the negative, the orthodox from the heretical, and which is obligatory and relevant from the mass of irrelevant or merely interesting opinions and data. The collector's passion, on the other hand, is not only unsystematic but borders on the chaotic, not so much because it is a passion as because it is not primarily kindled by the quality of the object – something that is classifiable – but is inflamed by its 'genuineness,' its uniqueness, something that defies any systematic classification. Therefore, while tradition discriminates, the collector levels all differences ...<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> As will become evident in the third chapter, the role of the storyteller coincides with that of the collector – as opposed to the notion of History as being consistent with tradition.



In my understanding, it is possible for the preservation of one tradition to lead to discrimination against another. The characterisation of and the meaning ascribed to the different customs and beliefs of a particular tradition are thought to be achieved partly by separating these ideas and values from those of other traditions. Through such a process of division, the customs and beliefs which are different from those of the protected tradition, are marginalised.

By means of a consideration of Johan Degenaar's arguments regarding reason and repetition in 'Myth and the collision of cultures' (1995), I will indicate that these notions are modes through which selected customs and beliefs are preserved. Yet this preservation is fictitious. It denotes bias and closure instead. I will further show that the idea of preservation is inseparable from the way in which the Afrikaans language was used at the time of Apartheid. In a discussion of my work, I hope to suggest that the often deceptive character of tradition can be revealed through confrontation and interference.

In regarding a particular authority as the norm, the interests of that authority are protected. Traditions which are different from the norm are marginalised according to the extent of their variation. In his article 'Myth and the collision of cultures' (1995:Online), Johan Degenaar argues that, in the case of modernity, a sovereign position is ascribed to reason.<sup>10</sup> This position enables reason to 'legislate rules for the whole of life' (1995:Online). Regarded as the norm, the interests of a dominant authority are represented as reason. These interests are consequently in the position to legislate rules. Customs and beliefs deviating from the norm are considered to be 'un-reason'. As the binary opposite of reason, 'un-reason' is associated with the irrelevant, with feelings, emotions, instinct and sentiment. Yet in this context reason is constructed out of the preferences of an authority. A contradiction surfaces in the sense that the supposed reason becomes exactly that

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<sup>10</sup> 'Modernity consists of a critical stance towards premodernity' which is 'characterised by myth as the most basic form of storytelling' (Degenaar 1995:Online). Reason – in this context considered to oppose myth – consequently plays a predominant role in modernity. Another aim of modernity is to construct 'a rational system in order to understand reality. This is a shift from word as myth (muthos) to word as reason (logos)' (1995:Online).



which modernism equates with myth – ‘a fictitious idea’ (1995:Online). From this perspective reason as a particular perception or as a *fixed* idea, becomes *fiction*.

As discrimination is exposed by a particular notion of *fixion* in modernity, this notion takes on a different form in the case of premodernity. Regarding premodernity, the view of culture is that of a ‘self-enclosed whole’:<sup>11</sup>

This closure is inevitable if culture is viewed primarily in terms of myths as dramatic narratives which are *repetitions* of primordial events and which authorise the form of life of the particular community. It leads inevitably to a closure both with the regard to the possibility of alternative ways of understanding and with regard to the nature of other premodern cultures (*italics mine*) (Degenaar 1995:Online).

Authority is generated and maintained within a premodern community through the constant repetition of primordial events. Peculiar to this form of repetition, room is not provided for ruptures or interruption. In this context of seclusion, authority is not acknowledged as a form of power attained *in terms of* other and differing communities. Inherent in this negligence of difference is the possibility of power attained *at the expense of* other communities. According to Johan Degenaar (1995:Online) there is in premodernity an ‘absence of respect for the otherness of the other culture and an inability to apply the principle of the negotiation of difference’. There is within the obsessive duplication and pursuit of continuity of the premodern community an attempt towards the preservation of its interests. Yet, what is ironic about the notions of preservation, repetition and continuity in their association with premodern communities, is the translation of the word ‘repeat’ as *seek*, from the Latin word *repetere* (*The concise Oxford dictionary* 1995, s.v. ‘repeat’). *Seek* questions the stability and resulting authority awarded to the notion of repetition in the context of premodern communities. In this relationship between

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<sup>11</sup> Viewed in this context, culture coincides with a fairly limited definition of the word: ‘Culture as the form of life or life-style of a community – [sic] a community viewed as a group of people sharing certain characteristics and interests, for example, a community of peasants ...’ (Degenaar 1995:Online). In the context of modernism, the definition of culture corresponds with ‘a form of life of a national community in which a uniformity of culture is achieved by the imposition of either a dominant ethnic culture or a common culture brought about by the processes of industrialisation and modernisation’ (1995:Online).



'repeat' and seek the apparent self-sufficiency of premodern communities becomes unstable and a mere attempt towards constancy and permanence. Authority is therefore obtained by means of events allegedly secured or fastened through constant repetition. Repetition is in this context a reiteration aimed *towards*, instead of a reiteration *of* stability. The premodern view of culture as a 'self-enclosed w[hole]' is converted to *fixion* as the word 'repeat', translated as *seek*, spells incompleteness.<sup>12</sup>

The notion of *fixion* is incarnated in the concept of Apartheid. According to Paul Cilliers in his article 'On Derrida and apartheid' (1998:81) '[t]he way in which the Nationalist government fumbled with words was at times so inept as to be comical ..., but more so, it was so full of contradictions, especially when one compared what was being said for consumption *inside* South Africa to that which was said to the *outside*'. The Nationalist government's appropriation of the word 'nation'<sup>13</sup> coincides with Johan Degenaar's concern regarding this term in *Nations and nationalism: the myth of a South African nation* (1987b:1): 'There is a tendency to use the term nation as if only one meaning can be ascribed to the word, as if the meaning is not controversial and as if nation-building is the type of activity in which loyal citizens should unquestionably be involved'.<sup>14</sup> If taken into consideration that the word

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<sup>12</sup> The word 'tradition' is translated from the Latin word *tradere*, which means *hand on* and *betray* (*The concise Oxford dictionary* 1995, s.v. 'tradition'). In the juxtaposition of *hand on* and *betray*, the notion of *fixion* is resumed. This notion regards the numerous forms of definition, delineation and continuity or *handing on* by which stability and authority are obtained in communities, as deceptive. As these different forms of demarcation and supposed permanence are represented as transparent in tradition, betrayal surfaces.

<sup>13</sup> In 'Myth and the collision of cultures' (1995:Online), Degenaar explains that myth functions in modernity in a variety of ways of which one example is the function of myth in political ideologies. One such political myth is that 'God creates nations (nationalism)' in which case myth is regarded as laying 'the foundation of a political system' (1995:Online). Political myth is defined as 'a dramatic narrative which grounds political ideology, legitimises political action and mobilises people' (1995:Online).

<sup>14</sup> In my understanding the concept of nationhood opposed by Degenaar coincides with the idea which was maintained by the Nationalist government in Apartheid South Africa. This form of nationhood includes, among others, the following characteristics: '1) It is based on a view of a homogeneous culture according to which the culture of a community is a self-inclusive whole. 2) It is exclusivist in principle and therefore incapable of accommodating outsiders. 3) It appropriates the myth of the chosen people and uses it as legitimation for unjust actions ... 4) In a multi-cultural state it is incapable of accommodating cultures other than the dominant culture, with the result that it has to follow a policy of assimilation, oppression or segregation with regard to other cultures. 5) It dwarfs the individual by



'nation' is translated from a Latin word meaning *be born* (*The concise Oxford dictionary* 1995, s.v. 'nation'), the multiracial South African nation should be characterised by plurality. Approaching the idea of a nation in the context of South Africa as a 'self-centered universalist whole' therefore presupposes closure and as such discrimination becomes inevitable (Degenaar 1995:Online). Universalism opposes plurality, which on its part requires 'eternal vigilance', struggle and the 'negotiation of difference' (1995:Online). Degenaar (1987b:1) argues that he emphasises the importance of clarity with regard to the use of terms, because of 'the way language structures our experience and conditions our way of life'.

In his article 'Racism's last word' (1985:292), Jacques Derrida comments on the word 'Apartheid' that 'no tongue has ever translated this name'. Inherent in this form of preservation of the Afrikaans word is its refusal to be approached or touched:<sup>15</sup> '[B]y itself the word occupies the terrain ...' (1985:292). This terrain is an outlined space with closed off borders (1985:292). Roland Barthes uses the term 'tmesis' in *The pleasure of the text* (1975:11) to describe the process of intervention as a reader cuts into and takes a word apart. In order to cut into and take the word 'Apartheid' apart, various borders need to be crossed. 'Apartheid' cannot merely be translated. The word 'translate' in its association with transference suggests an effortless trip. 'Translate' does not allow sufficient room for the extent of the inevitable dispute, controversy and conflict which accompany the word 'Apartheid'. As a white, Afrikaans-speaking African, I do not find any redemption in mere translation. At the same time, this word cannot possibly be skipped in a reading of my past. The word needs to be confronted. Through the warfare by which its borders are crossed and its terrain penetrated, a relationship is established. Where the border is breached, or where the penetration of the closed terrain occurs is the intersection where dialogue is born.

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claiming that the individual constitutes himself through identification with the greater identity of the nation. 6) It reduces the crucial relationship of politics, namely the relation between society and state, to the notion of nationality, ignoring the plurality of units which comprise society' (Degenaar 1987b:12).

<sup>15</sup> 'In 1964, South Africa's Ministry of Public Works sought to assure the cleanliness of national emblems by means of regulation stipulating that it is "forbidden for non-Europeans to handle them" (Derrida 1985:292).



Within the context of my own work, the narrative *Skoot* ('shot' or 'lap') (figs. 1-13) resembles, among other things, my confrontation with the notions of 'tradition' and 'authority' in the context of Apartheid. *Skoot* is a book comprising thirteen digitally printed, double-page spreads. Found imagery ranging from end pages, envelopes, wrapping and photos printed in old magazines, as well as various drawings and words, together constitutes the content of this book.

A selection of words and events which were deemed important and valuable in the context of Apartheid is re-presented in a new context in *Skoot*. In my book these words and events are re-presented next to and/or fused with drawings, with found imagery which pertains to everyday household products, with fabric and stamps. These allegedly important words and events are hence removed or torn from the History books or textbooks in which they are generally represented as facts. Their re-presentation in *Skoot* poses questions and creates uncertainty instead. The words, found imagery and photos are juxtaposed with the drawings in such a way that a continuous intersection of alleged fact and event, fact and fiction or so-called reality and fantasy occurs.<sup>16</sup> The narrative thereby resists closure and does not denote a specific or chronological order.

The first double-page spread (fig. 1) reveals only part of a photograph depicting the induction of Mr C.R. Swart as the first State President of the Republic of South Africa on 31 May 1961.<sup>17</sup> The photograph is re-presented anonymously and penetrated by a drawing of an unidentified figure, which also dominates the composition. The images are further juxtaposed with the word *berooft* ('rob').<sup>18</sup> Yet it is unclear what the particular relation is between this word and the images. What is evident, though, is that the figure which appears on the left-hand side of the photograph holds a key

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<sup>16</sup> Chapter Three will specifically focus on the notions of image and text, as well as on the nature of the relationship between the two concepts.

<sup>17</sup> This particular double-page spread constitutes the first of the thirteen spreads which together comprise the narrative *Skoot*.

<sup>18</sup> As will be indicated later in this chapter, the term *roof* ('rob', 'robbery') was used in a particular context during the Apartheid Regime. In the History which was taught in schools at the time, this word was employed to refer to situations during which possessions were taken from the Afrikaners.



position. He is elevated – as if positioned on a platform – and surrounded or guarded by men dressed in uniforms. Furthermore, the red number ‘1’ which is placed upon this allegedly important figure singles him out as either the prime suspect or the main victim of this ‘robbery’. On the shirt of the figure which I have drawn, the words *privaat* (‘private’) and *sak* (‘bag’ or ‘pocket’), are juxtaposed with the words *reg* (‘right’ or ‘law’) and *eg* (‘true’, ‘real’, ‘genuine’).

In figure two, the word *volk* (‘nation’) is contrasted with an unspecified, seemingly historical event, as well as with a drawing portraying a woman and a baby. The ‘event’ appears to be a potentially tragic one, as opposed to the drawing which depicts a contented woman and baby. Both the printed image and the drawing are headed by the words *Kodak – vir volmaakte kiekies. Die film wat spesiaal geskik is vir Suid-Afrikaanse toestande*. (‘Kodak – for perfect snapshots.’<sup>19</sup> The film specially suitable for South African conditions.’) As the heading applies to both images, not only the difference in the circumstances of people in South Africa is emphasised, but also the severity of the circumstances of some. Whereas the group of people in the printed image appears to be in the midst of a crisis, the woman and baby which I have drawn seem completely unperturbed. The ambiguity inherent in the use of the word *volk* as a term which allegedly denotes unity when referring to the South African nation is highlighted. From this perspective, connotations with the word *volk* as also referring to ‘non-white labourers’ are likely to be conjured up.

In figure three, the word *vaderland*<sup>20</sup> (‘fatherland’) is juxtaposed with a female figure and with a drawing of an unknown setting. The figure is positioned in such a way that it divides the composition in two – thereby separating the word *vaderland* from the unidentified setting. No more than a fraction of the woman’s face is visible. She is identifiable only by means of an encircled number ‘1’, and by marks which appear on her dress and relate to the proportions of the body. Furthermore, the female

<sup>19</sup> ‘Snapshot’ is defined by *The concise Oxford dictionary* (1995, s.v. ‘snapshot’) as a *casual photograph taken quickly with a small hand camera*.

<sup>20</sup> Besides my use of the Afrikaans language in particular, the language is used with specific reference to the context of Apartheid – whether referring to an era, an Ideology or a Regime. The notion of patriarchy formed an indissoluble part of Apartheid.



figure has her back turned towards the word *vaderland* while she faces the setting which remains anonymous – owing to its lack of distinctive features which would enable the viewer to place it. Moreover, as the setting is contained within a frame, it could either resemble a mere picture or a sight perceived through a window or through an open door. From this perspective, it could be argued that the woman is in an enclosed environment – either studying the specific picture, taking in the scenery, or attempting to leave the particular space in which she finds herself. Alternatively, it could be argued that the woman finds herself excluded from the setting – which perhaps forms part of the *vaderland*.

In the preceding discussion on tradition and authority, and on the ways in which these notions are confronted in my work, I have endeavoured to indicate that the meaning ascribed to particular words and events is dependant on the context in which these words and events are presented. The concept of preservation refers to the intentional confinement of a custom, belief or word to a specific context. Yet, when such a custom, belief or word is removed from its restricted context and re-presented in an[other], biases are exposed and discrimination opposed as interaction between the different texts<sup>21</sup> inevitably occurs.

### *Discourse*

In my understanding, the notion of discourse is a form of discrimination against a singular, dominant body of [K]nowledge.<sup>22</sup> This particular form of discrimination inevitably leads to the recognition of the existence of various [k]nowledge[s]. In addition, these knowledges as different texts operate within separate contexts. The contexts change continually. Johan Degenaar (1987a:101) states that '[c]losures of

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<sup>21</sup> 'A weak interpretation [of the text] would be that whatever exists, is only accessible to man through language. According to a strong interpretation it means that there is nothing in the world which is not also text, that is, an open system of interrelated signs which have to be interpreted and are only accessible as elements in a differentiation process' (Degenaar 1987a:100).

<sup>22</sup> My understanding of discourse is mainly informed by the thoughts of Michel Foucault, as explained by Alec McHoul and Wendy Grace in *A Foucault primer: discourse, power and the subject* (1997).

contexts for the purpose of interpretation are possible but they are always provisional and not final, functional and not substantial'.

The purpose of the following discussion is to consider briefly Michel Foucault's perspective on the idea of discourse. I will subsequently indicate that, in order to prevent that a fixed meaning be ascribed to knowledge, it is necessary for a text to be continually interpreted and re-interpreted within its particular context.

Foucault thinks of discourse (or discourses) in terms of bodies of knowledge. His use of the concept moves it away from something to do with language (in the sense of a linguistic system or grammar) and closer towards the concept of discipline. We use the word 'discipline' here in two senses: as referring to *scholarly* disciplines such as science, medicine, psychiatry, sociology and so on; and as referring to disciplinary *institutions* of social control such as the prison, the school, the hospital, the confessional and so on. Fundamentally, then, Foucault's idea of discourse shows the historically specific relations between disciplines (defined as bodies of knowledge) and disciplinary practices (forms of social control and social possibility) (McHoul & Grace 1997:26).

Discourse as 'bodies of knowledge' discloses the dispersion and proliferation of different modes of thought (Hutton c1993:112). Through this disclosure, the idea of knowledge as possessing a single, autonomous and overarching character is opposed. Yet a specific body of knowledge, as associated with a corresponding institution, is revealed to serve the interests relevant to the particular institution. Discourses or bodies of knowledge are thereby, in my understanding, exposed as not being natural, but constructed. Since this construction occurs in conjunction with the interests of institutions, it is fundamental to consider the specific relation between a body of knowledge and its appropriate institution.

Meaning – or, in this case, knowledge – is 'context-bound, but context is boundless' (Culler 1994:123).<sup>23</sup> Degenaar (1987a:100) argues that this is the case, since 'the context itself is a text which must be interpreted'. According to Degenaar (1987a:98)

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<sup>23</sup> Similarly, the relation of image to text, or of picture to discourse, is approached as an infinite relation in Chapter Three.



'[t]he deconstructionist would say that the text as intertextual event itself changes continually, for the interrelationships between signs are never constant'. Both 'text' and 'context' are translated from Latin as *weave* (*The concise Oxford dictionary* 1995, s.v. 'text', 'context'). *Weave* refers to a process by which threads are interlaced vertically and horizontally. The interlacing is done by passing the shuttle holding the weft thread between the warp threads. This process coincides with *weave* as referring to a 'forward'<sup>24</sup> movement on a zigzag course. In both instances, *weave* is associated with a reciprocal motion. Meaning as a back-and-forth movement opposes any notion of stability or centrality. In my understanding, meaning therefore becomes that which *moves in between* texts. Thus meaning is trans-formed into a dynamic dialogue.

The way in which the threads connect through the process of *weaving* further suggests a relationship of inter-dependence. By continuously crossing each other, the vertical and horizontal threads are mutually strengthened. According to Roland Barthes (in Culler 1994:32,33) 'the text is not a line of words releasing a single "theological" meaning (the "message" of an Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash'. The point where two threads cross is at the same time a clash and an intersection, a war and a conversation.<sup>25</sup> Apart from being established by reciprocal movement, dialogue is formed through these relationships of difference. Threads only cross and simultaneously meet each other, because they are interlaced in two directions and not in one. Meaning is thus constructed through differences between texts, between con[text]s and between texts within their relevant con[text]s. Meaning therefore exists because of plurality and difference, and is dependant upon inexorable conflict, discord and tension for its survival.

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<sup>24</sup> In this con[text], 'forward' does not refer to progression and should not be interpreted in terms of the hierarchical opposition 'forward/backward'. In such oppositions the first term is given priority over the second term (Degenaar 1987a:93).

<sup>25</sup> 'Converse' stems from the Latin word *convertere* which means *convert*. The word *convert* is on its part translated from Latin as *turn*. (*The concise Oxford dictionary* 1995, s.v. 'converse', 'convert'.) To 'converse' as associated with the word *turn*, in my understanding suggests flexibility. *Turning* refers to movement and change, to possible inversion and reversal.

As knowledge is inevitably con[text]-bound, the creation of meaning is dependant on the consideration of a body of knowledge within its particular con[text]. If the relation between text and con[text] is not acknowledged, a fixed meaning is ascribed to knowledge.

### *Power and Truth*

In considering the nature of the relations which exist between disciplines or bodies of knowledge and disciplinary institutions, I will indicate that Knowledge is a formation of power. Similar to the notions of reason and repetition as ways in which traditions are allegedly preserved, social institutions (and language) house – or preserve – the unspoken warfare of political power.

As all texts are different and in addition subjected to continuous change, dialogue and inter-action between texts are characterised by dispute and vigour. In this con[text] of enduring rupture, the notion of peace as associated with stability and the absence of dis-agreement and conflict, becomes unsettling. In *Power/knowledge: selected interviews and other writings, 1972-1977* (1980:90), Michel Foucault describes peace as 'a form of unspoken warfare':

Furthermore, if it is true that political power puts an end to war, that it installs, or tries to *install*, the reign of peace in civil society, this by no means implies that it suspends the effects of war or neutralises the disequilibrium revealed in the final battle. The role of political power, on this hypothesis, is perpetually to re-inscribe this relation through a form of unspoken warfare; to re-inscribe it in social institutions, in economic inequalities, in language, in the bodies themselves of each and everyone of us (*italics mine*).

Peace, as an *installation*<sup>26</sup> of political power, occupies a fixed position. This position

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<sup>26</sup> 'Stall' stems from the Old English word *steall*, which is related to *stand* (*The concise Oxford dictionary* 1995, s.v. 'stall'). *Stand* refers to, among other meanings, the state of being situated or



is equated with equilibrium, balance and stability. War as the binary opposite of peace is therefore equated with disequilibrium, imbalance and instability. Yet, in the case of a seesaw, a fixed position is sustained through imbalance. Disequilibrium occurs as soon as the seesaw is brought to a standstill. In this con[text], balance as a 'non-imbalance' is exclusively achieved by continuous movement. The notion of peace, which is traditionally equated with equilibrium and stability, is therefore constructed through imbalance and disequilibrium. As a form of 'unspoken warfare', peace cannot be equated with the supposedly harmonious coexistence of texts, but with dominance. Peace therefore refers to the introduction of power into the relationships between texts. In this con[text], peace becomes exclusive and its supposed presence an indication of prevailing discrimination.

According to Foucault (1980:91), '[e]ven when one writes the history of peace and its institutions, it is always the history of ... war that one is writing'. He further argues that peace is maintained by political power. Politics is consequently seen 'as sanctioning and upholding the disequilibrium of forces that was displayed in war' (1980:90). As social institutions on their part generally participate in promoting political power, they can be regarded as contributing to the construction and preservation of peace. The 'historically specific relations' between social institutions and their respective bodies of knowledge therefore inevitably become relations manipulated and moulded by power. '[K]nowledge gained on the basis of disciplinary power is formulated according to "norms" of behaviour. But what is centrally at issue is the types of *instruments* and *procedures* that harness the accumulation of knowledge. They all involve some form of unequal intercourse between two agents or parties' (McHoul & Grace 1997:70,71). Knowledge is thus exposed as a formation of power and power produces discourse (Foucault 1980:119).

In South Africa, the History taught in schools during the Apartheid Regime was a History which sympathised with the Afrikaner. This History was presented in *textbooks*, which supposedly contained the *recorded facts* of the South African

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positioned in a particular place. This fixed position opposes the notion of movement and is traditionally associated with a state of equilibrium and balance.



past.<sup>27</sup> Narratives characterised by events and terminology which put the Afrikaner in a central position traversed this History.<sup>28</sup> In these narratives, the Afrikaners either *seized* or otherwise were *stolen from* in battles. When they defeated their enemies, the word *buit* characterised the land or possessions seized by the Afrikaners. *Buit* can be compared with the word 'spoils', which is associated with victory when that which is gained is considered to be gained through effort and consequently looked upon as a reward. *Roof* was used to refer to a situation during which possessions were taken *from* the Afrikaners. The word *roof* is connected to fraudulence, plundering and robbery and is often considered to coincide with violence. According to the selective History presented by the Apartheid Regime, the Afrikaner occupied either the position of victor or victim.

In addition to knowledge being formulated according to 'norms' of behaviour, the concept of sovereignty allows for the discourse and techniques of right to be presented in such a way as to obliterate the domination which is intrinsic to the power producing this knowledge. Power is thus presented as a legitimate right of sovereignty with a legal obligation to obey it. Power is hence legitimised by the notion of sovereignty. Sovereignty and obedience can therefore be substituted by the problem of domination and subjugation. (Foucault 1980:95,96.)

The Dutch Reformed Church constituted the notion of 'religion' within Apartheid Ideology. Yet this church merely represented one particular [de]nomination among various [de]nominations. This form of segregation and dissociation was presented in terms of superiority and sovereignty. The Apartheid Ideology presented the particular dogma as having exclusive access to the truth. As the dogma of the Dutch Reformed Church formed an integral part of the Apartheid Ideology, the church also

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<sup>27</sup> According to Diane Macdonell (1986:2), the discourses of knowledge were previously 'considered mainly as a "neutral" area'. Yet in my thinking, ignorance was not the reason for the specifically constructed and partial History taught in schools during the Apartheid Regime.

<sup>28</sup> The notion of Apartheid History as sympathetic to the Afrikaner coincides with McHoul and Grace's thought (1997:17) that 'official knowledges (particularly the social sciences) work as instruments of "normalisation", continually attempting to manoeuvre populations into "correct" and "functional" forms of thinking and acting'. The Apartheid Regime could therefore 'correct' behaviour deviating from that of the 'ideal Afrikaner', on the principle of 'normalisation'.



contributed to its legitimisation. Through this legitimisation, the various forms of domination and subjugation intrinsic to the Apartheid Ideology were justified under the name of sovereignty.<sup>29</sup>

Foucault posits a fairly intricate relationship to exist between power, rules of right and truth. He relates the mechanism of power to two points of reference: '[O]n the one hand, to the rules of right that provide a formal delimitation of power; on the other, to the effects of truth that this power produces and transmits, and which in turn reproduce this power' (1980:92,93).

My problem is ... this: what rules of right are implemented by the relations of power in the production of discourses of truth? Or alternatively, what type of power is susceptible of producing discourses of truth that in a society ... are endowed with such potent effects? What I mean is this: ... basically in any society, there are manifold relations of power which permeate, characterise and constitute the social body, and these relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse. There can be no possible exercise of power without a certain economy of discourses of truth which operates through and on the basis of this association. We are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth (Foucault 1980:93).

Discourse (as bodies of knowledge), power and truth are interdependent. Discourse is the field of what can be said. This field is by no means a neutral or innocent terrain, but instead one permeated with power. The various institutions traversing the field of discourse constitute structures which participate in maintaining and defending the disequilibrium of forces which is intrinsic to political power. Discourse, bodies of knowledge or what is to count as truth, is therefore determined by power. Yet, although truth is produced by power, power is simultaneously dependant on truth for its implementation. As the institutions promote political power, the truths

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<sup>29</sup> Ironically, the word 'dogma' is translated from the Greek *dogma -matos* as *opinion*. *Opinion* is in turn related to a Greek word which means *seem*. (*The concise Oxford dictionary* 1995, s.v. 'dogma'.) These translations of the word 'dogma' expose its fragility. In this con[te]xt, the word adopts the character of a mere façade. The notion of deception opposes the sovereignty and truth with which this term is generally associated. The word *opinion* refers to a belief or assessment based on grounds short of proof or to a view held as probable. *Seem* addresses concepts of appearance or perception.

which they produce make the laws (Foucault 1980:94). 'Truth becomes a function of what *can* be said, written or thought' (McHoul & Grace 1997:33). From this perspective, power relations produce the truths we live by.

With reference to my own work, the narrative *Skoot* (figs. 1-13) opposes fixed meaning – a notion inherent in knowledge gained on the basis of disciplinary power. This confrontation takes place by means of both juxtaposing and fusing various texts.

When figure four is viewed from a distance, the word *toorn* ('wrath') is juxtaposed with a [text]ure that conjures up associations with delicately woven lace and doilies. Upon close scrutiny, it becomes evident that the 'lace' is composed of several, joined visual depictions of a church. The viewer is separated from this church by a lattice fence in front of the building. Moreover, the drawings of the church are in different stages of completion. Some of these stages reveal only the tower of the building.<sup>30</sup> During these particular stages, the church resembles a phantom image and the visual emphasis is therefore shifted from the building to the lattice fence.

When re-considering the word *toorn* in the con[text] of the preceding observations, the association with *toorn* as referring to God's fury in particular is deemed possible. In addition, the words *toorn* and *toring* ('tower'), are virtually indistinguishable when pronounced. Yet the specific typeface used for the word *toorn* also creates visual connections with the fonts generally used for wedding cards. In this con[text], the 'lace' is likely to be associated with a wedding dress. As a fine fabric which is made by weaving thread in patterns, lace is considered as valuable and expensive – used in the trimming of such precious garments. From this perspective, the church – depicted with a lattice fence which locks out the viewer/reader – is trans-formed into a place where bonds are created. Similarly, in the con[text] of this work, an unconventional tie is also formed between the church – as an institution intrinsic to

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<sup>30</sup> I also regard a tower as being a phallic symbol.



Apartheid and its patriarchal Ideology – and women – traditionally associated with processes such as weaving or crochet by which lace or doilies are created.

In the next double-page spread (fig. 5), a cross is juxtaposed with a page composed of the paper in which Lion<sup>31</sup> matchboxes are wrapped. On this paper there are several faces which I have drawn and a faint copy of the cross with which this page is contrasted, as well as the word *skil* ('peel' or 'rind') in its centre.

The faces drawn on the wrapping paper are those of the men who were involved in the Information Scandal which was disclosed in 1978: Mr B.J. Vorster, Dr Connie Mulder, Dr Eschel Rhoodie, General Hendrik van den Bergh and Mr P.W. Botha. This scandal was 'an R85 million, secret five-year propaganda war, built around 180 projects and aimed at gaining international control of the country and buying South Africa's way into the international corridors of power' (Alhadeff 1985:138). Coinciding with the notions of secrecy and disclosure is the meaning of the word *skil*. When perceived as a noun, *skil* refers to the rind or skin of a fruit or vegetable, in other words to that which encloses, conceals or protects. When perceived as a verb, *skil* refers to the act of cutting away or to the pulling off of the skin or outer layer of something. From this perspective, *skil* as a verb stands for the process by which the inside, the unseen, the hidden or the fragile is exposed or revealed. In addition, Lion 'safety matches' constitute a mundane and therefore largely unnoticed or overlooked object. Yet this item probably appears in every South African household. The cross mentioned earlier is constituted of a particular arrangement of the lions which appear on the wrapping paper. On close observation, the specific structuring of this cross additionally leads to the disclosure of what seems to re-present the female genitals – constructed by each (male) lion together with its mirror image. On further consideration of the cross, associations with medical help and hence healing and restoration, as well as with addition and hence plurality, are conjured up.

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<sup>31</sup> In my thinking, the lion is commonly perceived as a symbol of strength (and power) with regard to the South African context.

In the preceding discussion on power and truth, and on the ways in which these notions are confronted in my work, I have endeavoured to indicate that the notion of power refers to the particular nature of the relations between institutions and bodies of knowledge. Knowledge is therefore not only revealed to be constructed, but is simultaneously exposed as a formation of power. A fixed meaning is thus ascribed to Knowledge. Yet my work, as an attempt to resist closure by both juxtaposing and fusing various texts, opposes this fixed meaning. Various flexible relations are created between traditionally disparate texts. In addition, the fusion of numerous dissimilar texts reveals the containment of the one within the other. From this perspective, a *weave* of texts is constructed and any notions of stability or centrality hence resisted. Meaning therefore inevitably becomes that which *moves in between* the different texts.

### *Genealogy*

In accordance with the concept of power as a fixed relation, the History which was taught in schools during the time of the Apartheid Regime was a History in service of this Regime and its Ideology. In this History, the Afrikaner occupied a central position – in conflict represented as holding either the position of victor or victim. From this perspective, the Afrikaner was hence involved in an unequal relationship with those different from or other than him. Yet genealogy, in its association with discontinuity and disruption and in its recognition of the countless 'illegitimate' knowledges, intervenes between this supposedly Grand Narrative and its fixed meaning.

In order to re-w[rite] Apartheid History, I need to receive, in Walter Benjamin's words, the 'fullness of its past' (1992:246). Like Hannah Arendt's 'collector' in the 'Introduction' of *Illuminations* (1970:44), I need to defy any 'systematic classification'. In the defiance of chronological and systematic ordering, all differences are levelled (1970:44). Like the chronicler in Benjamin's 'Thesis on the philosophy of history' (1992:246), I need to recite the 'events without distinguishing between major and minor ones'. Michel Foucault (1980:81,82) uses the term 'genealogy' to refer to the



union of those 'historical contents that have been buried and disguised in a functionalist coherence or formal systemisation' and those 'knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated'. Genealogy thus refers to both the erudite, and the disqualified knowledges:

What it really does is to entertain the claims to attention of local, discontinuous, disqualified, illegitimate knowledges against the claims of a unitary body of theory which would filter, hierarchise and order them in the name of some true knowledge and some arbitrary idea of what constitutes a science and its objects. ... We are concerned ... with the insurrection of knowledges that are opposed primarily not to the contents, methods or concepts of a science, but to the effects of the centralising powers which are linked to the institution and functioning of an organised scientific discourse within a society ... (1980:83,84).

A genealogical approach to Apartheid History trans-forms this supposedly complete and ordered Text into a fragmentary and dis-ordered [text]ure.<sup>32</sup> In my thinking, such an approach to the Apartheid Text would inevitably coincide with Roland Barthes's 'abrasive' approach to narratives (1975:11,12): 'Thus, what I enjoy in a narrative is not directly its content or even its structure, but rather the abrasions I impose upon the fine surface ...'. These 'abrasions' damage and thereby trans-form the precious Text to [text]ure. The initial smooth surface, characteristic of a static, ordered Text, is replaced by a dynamic and consequently dis-ordered and fragmentary one. In the consumption of this [text]ure, every reader has the opportunity to constantly create an[other] dis-order. Through such a destruction of and intervention with the Apartheid Narrative, the domination which is intrinsic to this History is challenged.

A Spanish counterpart of the English word 'abrasion', is the verb *abrasar*. *Abrasar* is translated as *to burn (up); to dry up, parch; to scorch*. In addition to *abrasar*, the verb *abrazar* is translated as *to embrace, hug, hold; to include, take in; to adopt, embrace*. (*Collins Spanish concise dictionary* 1993, s.v. 'abrasar', 'abrazar'.) One concept which connects the words 'abrasion', *abrasar* and *abrazar* is the idea of heat

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<sup>32</sup> 'Texture', like the words 'text' and 'context', is translated from Latin as *weaving* (*The concise Oxford dictionary* 1995, s.v. 'texture').



or warmth. On both occasions, despite the difference in meaning between the words 'abrasion' and *abrazar*, the heat generated is the result of a form of inter-action or of a particular relationship. In both instances the production of heat is therefore dependant on plurality, as contact requires two or more surfaces to touch. Depending on the intensity of the movement causing the friction or on the duration of the embrace, more or less heat is generated. The relationship between *abrasar* and *abrazar*<sup>33</sup> is analogous to that of 'abrasion' and *abrazar*. Only a reader who passionately embraces the text is able to create sufficient heat for the text to be ablaze.<sup>34</sup> As heat is associated with energy, burning could refer to the epitome of this energy. Between *abrasar* on the one hand and *abrazar* on the other, is the birth of a dynamic inter-action between the reader and her text. The exclusive Apartheid Text can only be trans-formed<sup>35</sup> to an inclusive [text]ure if it is not merely read, but touched, dis-ordered and therefore re-written by every reader.

According to Michel Foucault (1991:88) '[h]istory becomes "effective" to the degree that it introduces discontinuity into our very being'. He further argues that knowledge is not made for understanding, but for *cutting*. Dis-continuity and cutting are directly connected with each other. Dis-continuity is that which occurs because of the ruptures caused by cutting as a form of intervention. The notion of 'cutting' also coincides with the term 'tmesis', which Roland Barthes (1975:11) uses to refer to a

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<sup>33</sup> In *castellano*, which is a Spanish dialect, no distinction is made between the pronunciation of the letters 's' and 'z'. *Abrasar* and *abrazar* therefore have to be read to be differentiated. The notion of phonocentrism is hereby also opposed. 'Phonocentrism privileges speech over writing and is based on the wrong assumption that speech directly expresses meaning to which the mind has immediate access. It is also mistakenly assumed that writing copies speech, degrading it to the bottom of an hierarchical order' (Degenaar 1987a:93).

<sup>34</sup> A rich inter-textual event occurs between this con[text] in which the word 'blaze' is used and the other meanings associated with the word. 'Blaze' is also defined as *a mark made on a tree by slashing the bark esp. to mark a route, or as [to] proclaim as with a trumpet* (*The concise Oxford dictionary* 1995, s.v. 'blaze').

<sup>35</sup> Paul Cilliers in his article 'On Derrida and apartheid' (1998:81), has a meaningful argument in terms of the trans-formation of the word Apartheid: 'Apartheid was, and remains, evil under any name, and deserves "unconditional" rejection. But does that mean that we should not follow the word through all its historical transformations? Does deconstruction not teach us that the different ways in which a word is used, especially when trying to repress its meaning, can be marvellously revealing? ... [I]s one of the important strategies of deconstruction not exactly to look for such contradictions and then to use them in attempts to dismantle the system that imposes its hierarchies on our language and on our behaviour?'.



particular intervention of a reader with her text. In my thinking, the idea of 'cutting' refers not only to an *intervention with* knowledge, but also to a *revelation of* knowledge. A cut surface will either reveal that which it covers, or, otherwise, that which it contains.<sup>36</sup> The precious and valuable are protected by covering or envelopment. In this con[text], the subjugated knowledges and texts can be regarded as indispensable to history. As indicated by Foucault (1991:76), genealogy 'requires patience and a knowledge of details, and it depends on a vast accumulation of source material':

... it must record the singularity of events outside of any monotonous finality; it must seek them in the most unpromising places, in what we tend to feel is without history – in sentiments, love, conscience, instincts; it must be sensitive to their recurrence, not in order to trace the gradual curve of their evolution, but to isolate the different scenes where they engaged in different roles. Finally, genealogy must define even those instances when they are absent, the moment when they remained unrealized ...

The [text]ure of my narrative *Skoot* (figs. 1-13) is uneven and fragmentary. Its disorder does not reflect any systematic or chronological ordering. There is no linear progression and no intended closure or finality, but rather a conglomeration of texts which obliges the reader/viewer to intervene in the narrative. A reading of this [text]ure therefore requires a continuous back-and-forth movement between the different texts.<sup>37</sup> A ruptured reading occurs – characterised by intervention, dialogue and pauses. Such a broken reading is partly described by Barthes in *The pleasure of the text* (1975:12) as follows: '... I read on, I look up, I dip in again'.

In figure six, the word *vorentoe* ('forward') appears on what seems to be the mirror image of a signpost. Therefore, in order to read the word 'forward', the viewer/reader needs to read from right to left – what would traditionally be associated with reading 'backwards'. From this perspective, the arrow which appears on the signpost also points backwards. In this con[text], the word 'backward' is inevitably

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<sup>36</sup> I detect a strong correlation between the notion of revelation as associated with 'cutting', intervention and 'tmesis', and the word *skil* (peel) (fig. 5) when it is perceived as a verb.

<sup>37</sup> I see this movement between the texts as including the reader – as a text.



contained in the word 'forward'.<sup>38</sup> Yet, as the term 'forward' is connected to the future – to notions regarding movement, action or gesture towards a goal or towards what is ahead in space or time, the term 'backward' conjures up associations with the past, with history or with that which preceded the present. In the 'backward' reading of 'forward', the concepts of past and future are therefore not only contained within each other, but are simultaneously involved in a relationship of friction. Additionally, the mere process by which the narrative *Skoot* was constructed denotes such a relationship of resistance between the past and the present: imagery found in old magazines, as well as imagery that re-presents historical events or that creates links with the past has been put together through a computerised process.

A consideration of the process by which *Skoot* was created, as well as of the several observable features pertaining to the compositions of the double pages and to the images and words used and juxtaposed, reveals various ways in which attempts were made to confront an allegedly comprehensive History presented by the Apartheid Regime. This was a History characterised by continuity, progression, stability and uniformity. It comprised a filtered, slanted Narrative of power, discrimination and concealed ideologies.

Most of the drawings which appear in *Skoot* were done with a sable brush and Indian ink. As I held the brush in a particular way – by the very end – in the majority of these drawings, I was only allowed a limited degree of control over the specific marks or lines. In addition, as the ink is permanent, 'mistakes' could not be obliterated. Yet, unlike this organic process, the use of the computer enables the artist to undo actions – to erase or correct mistakes.<sup>39</sup> With regard to the composition of the different pages, images and words are frequently cut off. Mostly only fragments of texts are visible. Regarding the images, patches of colour – roughly shaped according to the outlines of particular areas in drawings – are de-

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<sup>38</sup> The idea of a reciprocal movement taking place between the past and the present and/or future, will be further pursued in Chapter Three with regard to the reading of the book *Terugbe[taal]* ('re-pay', 'refund', 'pay back').

<sup>39</sup> The computer can thus be perceived as a tool either by which renewal, retrieval or restoration is made possible, or by which the obliteration or concealment of mistakes is enabled.



registered: those relating to the clothes of a male figure (fig. 1), to the face, hands, legs and the dress of a baby (fig. 2), and to the high heels of a woman (fig. 7). Similarly, the outlines of a drawing re-presenting a boy (fig. 8), seem to fit a mould merely suggested by the shape of a section removed from a piece of material. Additionally, stains, blemishes or imperfections are highlighted (fig. 7). Hesitant and reluctant lines are used (fig. 9). These lines often simply end and thereby only suggest a particular shape, limb or body part. In many places the lines are drawn and re-drawn several times. Various disparates are further juxtaposed or fused: a supposedly critical historical event and the drawing of a scene pertaining to snapshots (fig. 2); the word *toorn* ('wrath') and a fine, delicate [text]ure resembling lace when perceived from a distance (fig. 4); a cross as a symbol of restoration and healing, and lions (fig. 5); a design conjuring up associations with wallpaper or with the inside of a book cover, high heels and a scene possibly depicting part of the Great Trek in a rugged landscape (fig. 7); marks denoting stains and the proper name of a well-known South African bleach – *Jik* (fig. 7); a pattern relating to *Novilon* – a floor covering formerly fashionable for use in bathrooms and kitchens – and the outside of a spaza – usually a small shop which is situated in an informal settlement (fig. 10). Lastly, [text]ures and words as indexes of activities which traditionally pertain to women are also included in *Skoot*: lace (fig. 4) and a material which creates links with tapestry work (fig. 8); the word *skil* ('peel') (fig. 5) and the proper name *Jik* (fig. 7) – both associated with domestic activities related to cooking and washing. In addition, images of women re-presented in particular con[text]s are juxtaposed with words strongly related to the patriarchal Apartheid Regime: a woman and a child – the woman largely cut off by the edge of the page – with the allegedly inclusive word *volk* ('nation') (fig. 2), and a woman whose face disappears from the page – hence she is only identifiable by means of a number and the proportions of her body – with the word *vaderland* ('fatherland') (fig. 3).

Besides being an endeavour to oppose relations of power, *Skoot* is an attempt to alienate the viewer/reader from the South African History as it was presented by the Apartheid Regime. Only fragments of this Narrative are re-presented. In addition, these fragments are re-presented in an[other] con[text] and juxtaposed with words, images and details pertaining to the traditionally feminine and to the racially 'other',



to the mundane, the personal and the private – notions excluded by the Apartheid History. By means of the ruptures or gaps occurring between these disparate texts, numerous inconsistencies referring to notions of domination and discrimination are exposed. A shift in perspective takes place as the familiar Apartheid Text is thus perceived in a different light. Genealogy therefore remembers the ‘other’ and creates the opportunity for redemption.

### *Summary*

In this chapter I have attempted to indicate the ways in which History and Power are interrelated. I have implied that power is not an entity, but instead a relationship which is characterised by a fixed meaning. I have further suggested that history is always mediated by re-presentations. Yet the slanted History which was presented by the Apartheid Regime was presented as a representation – as a copy or a duplication of the past. From this perspective, Apartheid History does not acknowledge the mediation inherent in history as a re-presentation of the past and it therefore presupposes a fixed meaning. As opposed to the notions of preservation and repetition which enable such a fixed meaning in History representation, my work – in accordance with genealogy as an inclusive form of history – acknowledges and responds to mediation. Accordingly, my work evidently resembles a re-presentation of the past. The viewer/reader becomes alienated *from* a biased History as familiar words and images are re-presented in con[text]s different from those with which they are traditionally associated. Meaning is created as the viewer/reader *moves in between* the numerous disparate texts and con[text]s – inevitably alienated *to* a different perspective of the past.

In the next chapter I concentrate on the notions of meaning and fixed meaning with regard to the South African terrain at the time of the Apartheid Regime.



## **Chapter Two**

### ***Landscape and place***

Landscapes can be deceptive.

Sometimes a landscape seems to be less a setting for the life of its inhabitants than a curtain behind which their struggles, achievements and accidents take place.

For those who, with the inhabitants, are behind the curtain, landmarks are no longer only geographic but also biographical and personal.

(John Berger 1976:13,15.)

In the preceding chapter I have indicated that the relationship between institutions and their respective bodies of knowledge is characterised by a fixed meaning. In this chapter I will focus on the relationship between the South African terrain and its inhabitants in the con[text] of the Apartheid era. I approach my discussion by distinguishing between the notions of movement and limited movement as coinciding respectively with the concepts of meaning and fixed meaning. The first consideration is with regard to bodily movement as opposed to gesture – the former as a means by which marks were created on the terrain and the latter, as deliberated by Serge Tisseron, as producing the written or drawn mark. In the last consideration, the emphasis is shifted to the process of *reading* the landscape. The notions of movement and limited movement are subsequently deliberated with reference to the concept of naturalisation as opposed to my own work – naturalisation as a means of allegedly copying or duplicating a landscape site and my work as the re-presentation of such a site. Yet the main purpose of this chapter is to indicate in which way my work – in accordance with the theories of W.J.T. Mitchell – exposes the landscape as a text and symbolically establishes inter-action between the artist/viewer and *Vaderland* ('Fatherland').

According to Denis E. Cosgrove in *Social formation and symbolic landscape* (c1984:16,17), a reference dated 1725 defines landscape as '[a] view or prospect of natural inland scenery, such as can be taken in at a glance'<sup>40</sup> from one point of view'. Cosgrove (c1984:17) also refers to '[a] further definition, supported by a reference from 1603, more than a century earlier, [which] confirms the origin of this meaning: "a picture representing natural inland scenery as distinct from a sea picture, a portrait etc."'.

W.J.T. Mitchell refers to landscape in the 'Introduction' of *Landscape and power* (1994a:1) as 'a *process* by which social and subjective identities are formed' (italics mine). This view coincides with an interpretative strategy which is associated with postmodernism. In postmodernism the role of painting and pure formal visuality is de-centred. This de-centring is done in favour of 'a semiotic and hermeneutic approach' that treats landscape as 'an allegory of psychological or ideological themes' (1994a:1). The interpretative strategy associated with postmodernism, is hence 'exemplified in attempts to decode landscape as a body of determinate signs' (1994a:1). Mitchell, in this con[text], argues that 'landscapes can be deciphered as textual systems' (1994a:1).<sup>41</sup>

The notion of landscape as text opposes the traditional treatment of landscape aesthetics in terms of fixed genres, fixed media or fixed places 'treated as objects for visual contemplation or interpretation' (Mitchell 1994a:2). In *Art and the meaning of life* (Abrams in Degenaar 1987a:98) gives two deconstructive formulations among others, of the text:

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<sup>40</sup> According to *The concise Oxford dictionary* (1995, s.v. 'glance'), the word 'glance' is described as a *brief look* or as a *flash or gleam*. In this con[text], 'glance' can hence refer to a notion of disinterest and a blasé attitude towards the 'view or prospect of natural inland scenery'. The apparent disinterest which surfaces in this limited definition of landscape reveals deception when considered in terms of colonisation.

<sup>41</sup> The notion of landscape as a textual system coincides with what W.J.T. Mitchell refers to as an 'imagetext' in *Picture theory: essays on verbal and visual representation* (1994b:9). The idea of replacing a relationship of binary opposition between image and text (or between picture and discourse) with a dialectical picture will be discussed in Chapter Three.



'The text is an episode in an all-encompassing textuality ... and: 'The text is a chain of marks vibrating with the free and incessant play of différance'.<sup>42</sup>

Since other texts are also involved in a text,<sup>43</sup> landscape is trans-formed into a dynamic medium in which its inhabitants live and move and have their being. In addition, landscape is 'itself in motion from one place or time to another' (Mitchell 1994a:2). In this con[text], there is a reciprocal process of writing and re-writing between the landscape and its participants or viewers.

As meaning is 'a product of a play of differences in a text within a context', neither text nor con[text] is ever an unproblematic given (Henning in Degenaar 1987a:100). Coinciding with this description of meaning, is Roland Barthes's reasoning that a text is 'a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings ... blend and clash'. The landscape accordingly becomes fragmented – 'a chaotic collection of bits and pieces', rather than 'an ordered, coherent pictorial whole' (Bermingham 1994:86). Both text and con[text] must consequently always be 'defined, delimited, "read", and interpreted' (Henning in Degenaar 1987a:100).

The process of reading a landscape – as a text regarded as problematic, fragmented and chaotic – coincides with ruptures and dis-agreements between a reader and [he]r text. In my thinking, the landscape herein corresponds to Barthes's 'text of bliss' (1975:14):

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<sup>42</sup> Johan Degenaar (1987a:94) states that '[t]he word différance is derived from the term différer which means both to differ and to defer, postpone or delay'. Three aspects of writing are designated by *différance*: 'a "passive" difference which has already been made and available to the subject; an act of differing which produces difference; and an act of deferring which refers to the provisionality of distinctions and to the fact that the use of language entails the *interminable interrelationships* of signs' (italics mine) (1987a:94). According to Derrida, '*[d]ifférance* is the systematic play of differences, of traces of differences, of the spacing [*espacement*] by which elements relate to one another' (Derrida in Culler 1994:97).

<sup>43</sup> In 'Intertextualities' (1991:5), Heinrich F. Plett distinguishes between texts and intertexts: 'A text may be regarded as an autonomous sign structure, delimited and coherent. Its boundaries are indicated by its beginning, middle and end, its coherence by the deliberately interrelated conjunction of its constituents. An intertext, on the other hand, is characterized by attributes that exceed it. It is not delimited, but de-limited, for its constituents refer to constituents of one or several other texts. Therefore it has a twofold coherence: an *intratextual* one which guarantees the immanent integrity of the text, and an *intertextual* one which creates structural relations between itself and other texts'.

... the text that imposes a state of *loss*, the text that *discomforts* ... *unsettles* the reader's historical, cultural, psychological assumptions, the consistency of his tastes, values, memories, brings to a crisis his relation with language (*italics mine*).

The landscape thus becomes a terrain not of peace and tranquillity, but one of war, inflicting loss and causing dis-comfort. Yet, as has already been discussed in the previous chapter, warfare coincides with dialogue and inter-action. In this con[text], the landscape ceases to be an enclosed space accommodating a single view. It is instead converted to an open, inclusive space, a terrain characterised by plurality.

### *Limited movement and gesture*

From the preceding discussion we can accept that the landscape is not a fixed entity, but a text. It can therefore further be assumed that the relationship between the landscape and its inhabitants (or viewers) and relationships among the inhabitants (or viewers) themselves are characterised by power, should a fixed meaning be ascribed to the landscape. In the following discussion, I consider the nature of the South African terrain in the con[text] of the Apartheid era. Bearing in mind my own work and using the theories of Serge Tisseron in 'All writing is drawing: the spatial development of the manuscript' (c1994:29-42), I furthermore draw a parallel between bodily movement and the gesture of the hand – the one creating traces on the land and the other written or drawn marks on paper. From this perspective, a distinction is made between movement and limited movement as coinciding respectively with the notions of meaning and fixed meaning.

The Apartheid Regime was a Regime of delimitation and borders. Its borders were fixed – established and affirmed by the Apartheid Ideology. This Ideology sheltered the Afrikaner from those other than or different from him. Apartheid delimitation and division therefore not only centralised the Afrikaner, but also far exceeded the demarcation of the land. The experiences and mundane tasks of those 'non-Afrikaners' in service of the Afrikaner were permeated with notions of limitation.



Although there are many stories of farmers who have taken good care of their labourers,<sup>44</sup> the farmhouse is generally centrally positioned with the labourers' houses at a distance. At the back door of the farmhouse the workers ask for help in an emergency or report on tasks executed. In addition, the nature of the traces pertaining to the workers refers to further restrictions with regard to their movements: as opposed to the footprints of the labourers, the farmer's traces are generally those of tracks left behind by the tyres of a *bakkie*.

In *Place and placelessness* (c1976:10), Edward Relph defines a notion, which he describes as 'the egocentric space perceived and confronted by each individual', as 'perceptual space'. This space

has a *centre*, which is perceiving man, and it therefore has an excellent system of directions which change with the movement of the human body; it is limited and in no sense neutral; in other words it is finite, heterogeneous and subjectively defined and perceived; distances and directions are *fixed* and relative to man (*italics mine*) (Nitschke in Relph c1976:10).

Relph quotes Wallace Stegner's description of the pleasure and fulfilment which he experienced in wearing paths and tracks on his father's farm in Saskatchewan:

... they were ceremonial, an insistence not only that we had a right to be in sight on the prairie but that we *owned* and *controlled* a piece of it ... . Wearing any such path in the earth's rind is an intimate act, an act like love ... (*italics mine*) (Stegner in Relph c1976:10).<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> *The concise Oxford dictionary* (1995, s.v. 'labourer') defines the word 'labourer' as *a person doing unskilled, usu. manual, work for wages*. I am aware of the problematic status of the term when used in the con[text] of Apartheid. Yet I would like to propose a different reading of the word 'labourer' in the con[text] of this discussion. 'Labourer' is hereby not used as a derogatory term, but as referring to a person doing physical work. This work can also involve physical exertion. In my thinking, the word 'labourer' cannot be equated with the term 'unskilled'. Skill is not merely provided by technical training or higher education, but can be acquired with experience and time.

<sup>45</sup> In his book *The songlines* (1998:2), Bruce Chatwin describes songlines as 'the labyrinth of invisible pathways which meander all over Australia'. According to Chatwin, 'Aboriginal Creation myths tell of the legendary totemic beings ... singing out the name of everything that crossed their path – birds, animals, plants, rocks, waterholes – and so singing the world into existence' (1998:2). 'The man who went "Walkabout" was making a ritual journey. He trod in the footprints of his Ancestor. He sang the



In my understanding, the relationship between the South African terrain and its inhabitants at the time of the Apartheid Regime was one characterised by power. As the Afrikaner occupied a central position in Apartheid Ideology, his position and frame of reference were fixed. The interaction with and the marks made on the land during this era hence originated from this central position occupied by the Afrikaner. A biased environment was created, as those who were subjected to the Afrikaner as the Author of the terrain were marginalised and kept on the periphery. Their movements were determined by and regulated according to his traces as indications of where activity is required or of where movement is permitted or prohibited. From this perspective, a fixed meaning was ascribed to the land – its surface divided, blemished and tainted.

As the movement of the body leaves traces on the terrain, the written or drawn mark is traditionally formed by a gesture of the hand. In 'All writing is drawing: the spatial development of the manuscript' (c1994:29), Serge Tisseron argues that

[i]f we admit that the writing process is not only the transposition of a text which existed originally in the writer's mind, then the role of the inscriptive *gesture* in the writing process has been generally and markedly underestimated ... The genesis of the text, as of any written *mark* (particularly that of drawing), must be considered from the viewpoint of the original *spatial play* which the hand stages. ... Originally what is at stake in the hand is the very nature of the psychic investments which are bound up in it (*italics mine*).

According to Tisseron (c1994:32), the hand can be regarded in relation to the role it plays in attempting to symbolically re-construct the lost dual entity of maternal symbiosis. The notion of a symbolic re-construction of this particular symbiosis is derived from an approach which presents the world as 'a projection of the maternal body from which every human being is originally separated' (c1994:32). Yet, as opposed to this symbolic *re-construction*, gesturing is regarded as a motional force whereby the child's hand is driven by its own needs. Gesturing is consequently 'a

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Ancestor's stanzas without changing a word or note – and so *recreated the Creation*' (*italics mine*) (1998:14). For the Aborigines, the land can exist only once it has been seen and sung. From this perspective, 'to exist' is 'to be perceived'. (1998:14.)



critical means of *breaking away* from maternal symbiosis' (italics mine) (c1994:32). Therefore, in writing as well as in any creative activity which requires gesture, it plays the role of breaking away from this dual unity. The gesture of marking is thus placed into a double process of appropriating space: 'that of the physical, as well as psychic, distance separating the infant from the mother after birth, and that of the surface of the body itself' (c1994:32).<sup>46</sup>

Both the earliest gestures which refer to inscribing and the gestures by which the baby is separated from the m[other]'s body are movements drawing away from the axis of the body. The early 'inscriptive' gestures are thus regarded as a way for the child to stage the m[other]'s coming and going. The child accordingly has the opportunity to digest and work out this separation. (Tisseron c1994:33.) Together with the appearance of the first steps and language development, the child's first markings hence denote independence and demonstrate 'an active control over separation anxiety' (c1994:33). From this perspective, marking is connected to the psychic process involved in the separation of m[other] and child (c1994:34).

At the time of a child's first scribbles – which Tisseron regards as between six and twelve months – s[he] has not yet acquired visual control over [he]r gestures. Only gradually is the eye able to follow the hand, without yet guiding it. As the possibility of visual control over marking and gesture only appears after twenty-four months, the earliest drawings are guided by an exploration of *movement* and not by a *visual* exploration of space. Tisseron hence considers graphic expression to be blind at its origin. In this regard, he considers the gesture itself and not the marks or the gaze to matter most. The mark is thus merely a trace of the gesture which preceded its

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<sup>46</sup> In Sigmund Freud's perspective, 'the external world is perceived as a projection of one's own body' (Tisseron c1994:31). According to this perspective, several hand-related activities may be said to 'derive from the various instances of sublimating their original impulses' (c1994:31). Yet some authors question the status of the pleasure principle as the indispensable paradigm of psychoanalysis. They argue for a recognition of the 'binding impulse'. Although such an impulse parallels the sexual impulse, it is independent of it. (c1994:31.) As indicated by Tisseron, Irme Hermann lay the foundations of this argument. According to Hermann, 'along with the genito-sexual impulse, there exists a binding impulse ... characterized by the desire to cling on to the mother's body' (c1994:31). Efforts to fulfil this instinct remain frustrated in human babies. 'According to Irme Hermann, a sizable number of human achievements are intended to signify this essential frustration for which they substitute compensatory achievements' (c1994:32).



creation. In addition, the mark denotes movement as it makes the kinetic realm perceptible in the realm of visual re-presentation. From this perspective, the mark can be perceived as a 'visual reunion' of the two realms. (c1994:33,34.)

Tisseron (c1994:34) explains the psychic processes involved in the distinct moments of tracing the first markings with a gesture and the subsequent visual discovery of its production:

In the time when he carries out the marking gesture, the child identifies himself with the departing mother; later, considering the outcome of his gesture, the child identifies with the trace which this movement leaves behind. Simultaneously, however, the child is free to be the one who also rejects the mother, as the trace which he sees becomes the mother separated from him.

From this perspective, Tisseron argues that a structural *relationship* is at stake in the marking gesture, rather than in any of its re-presentations. He regards this 'structure' to be arranged around separation. (c1994:34.) The drawn mark therefore stages the separation process in which the child is pushed away from the m[other], yet is also 'coming away from her by pushing *her* away' (c1994:34).

According to Tisseron (c1994:34), 'the role of tracing in creating the separation [of m[other] and child] does not pertain only to the origination of the mark but also to the discovery of the trace'. Within the trace, every *gap* in drawing is also a *bridge* and vice versa. He argues that a trace simultaneously separates and binds the pieces of space which it de-limits. The trace is therefore the reified symbol of separation. (c1994:34,35.)

Whereas drawing is associated with the child, the act of writing is connected to the adult. Yet in writing the trace conjured up is described as a line. According to Tisseron, this 'line' is tied to the movement of the inscriber. S[he] uses this line 'to pull back the thought that has been cast out in the act of inscription' (c1994:36). Like the duality inherent in drawing, writing is a reciprocal motion 'of *casting* and *retrieving*, of *separating* and *binding*' (italics mine) (c1994:36). From this



perspective, the hand's drawing gesture is an essential movement by which thought learns to think itself through (c1994:36).

Regarding the con[text] of my own work, the narrative *Plek* ('place') (figs. 14-19) represents my endeavour to trans-form the relationship of power which characterised the interaction between the South African terrain and its inhabitants at the time of the Apartheid Regime. *Plek* consists of two digitally printed books – each constituting a landscape format made up of twelve concertina-bound pages. In both cases, six of the twelve pages contain images, while the remaining six pages consist of writing. With regard to the first book, the imagery (figs. 20, 24, 28, 32, 36 & 40) is constituted from the photocopies of photographs pertaining to sites which, for various reasons, can be associated with or connected to the Apartheid Regime. Each of these six pages is followed by a page containing the caption<sup>47</sup> of the photograph which I initially encountered (figs. 21, 25, 29, 33, 37 & 41). In the second book, the images (figs. 22, 26, 30, 34, 38 & 42) are visual interpretations – depicted with ink and brush – of those photographs portrayed in the first book. Each of these visual interpretations (or pages) is juxtaposed with a page following it<sup>48</sup> – the graphic image and/or geometrical shapes and [text]ure/s of the particular page comprise a word or words which have been repeatedly written with a sable brush and Indian ink (figs. 23, 27, 31, 35, 39 & 43).

As has already been indicated in the previous chapter, the notion of power does not refer to an entity, but to a relationship which is characterised by a fixed meaning. In my understanding, a relationship of this nature, between the land and its inhabitants, creates a terrain typified by centralisation on the one hand and marginalisation on the other. The movements of those who are kept on the periphery are limited and controlled. Marks made on the terrain by means of such movements therefore further denote restriction and domination. In this con[text], the marks which are

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<sup>47</sup> For the purpose of the thesis, I have deliberately used a computer to do the captions. In the actual artwork, I have used an old, cranky typewriter.

<sup>48</sup> I fully realise that in the case of a concertina-bound book, all the pages (except the first and last pages) are both preceded and followed by other pages.



created by those who occupy a centralised position instead, are indications of ownership and control. The term *Vaderland* ('Fatherland') as it was used by the Afrikaner to refer to the South African terrain during the Apartheid era, consequently becomes characterised by notions of power, domination and division.<sup>49</sup>

My narrative *Plek* (figs. 14-19) is a symbolical conversion of the South African terrain as *Vaderland*, into a terrain of inter-action and movement. The photographs which were used as reference material in the depiction of *Plek*, pertain to various sites which can be associated with *Vaderland*: a mostly barren landscape divided by a fence – the fence relating to those which are erected by planting fencing-poles and afterwards putting up wire netting and/or barbed wire (generally encountered on farms) (figs. 20 & 21); cultivated fields (figs. 24 & 25); a segregated beach area (figs. 28 & 29); graves simply marked by boulders (figs. 32 & 33); a man at his house which was destroyed by government bulldozers in February 1984 (figs. 36 & 37) and part of a dirt road<sup>50</sup> on a farm (figs. 40 & 41). However, the images as they appear in the first of the two books which constitute *Plek* do not resemble intact photographs. Instead the photographs were subjected to several processes. They were photocopied – thereby taking on a grainy [text]ure<sup>51</sup> and losing a considerable degree of quality. Additionally, the photocopies were scanned<sup>52</sup> whereafter certain areas were cropped, as well as some enlarged on the computer. Lastly, I had the re-

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<sup>49</sup> In my thinking, the notion of patriarchy is inherent in an approach to the South African terrain as *Vaderland*. The word 'patriarchy' is defined as *a form of social organization or government etc. in which a man or men rule and descent is reckoned through the male line* (*The concise Oxford dictionary* 1995, s.v. 'patriarchy'). As a concept which is characteristic of Apartheid, patriarchy is fused with various notions of exclusivity and elitism. Numerous forms of segregation therefore inevitably permeated the interaction with the South African terrain during the reign of the Apartheid Regime.

<sup>50</sup> Any road is both a means of separation – with regard to the particular surface which it divides – and unification – with regard to the locations which it joins.

<sup>51</sup> Personally, I associate this [text]ure with that characteristic of old photographs and films. Yet I also realise that such a [text]ure can be attained in photographs if a high-speed film is used – a film which is particularly sensitive to light and therefore generally used at night.

<sup>52</sup> In both photocopying and scanning, copies of the relevant material are produced by a process involving the *action* (or *movement*) of *light* (as opposed to darkness). Additionally, both processes – scanning in particular – are associated with the close *examination* of the pertinent surface. With reference to the con[text] of this discussion, I regard these concepts – 'movement', 'light' and 'examination' – as of crucial importance.



worked photographs re-printed – the prints comprising the six pages which each contains a short narrative (figs. 20, 24, 28, 32, 36 & 40). In the second book, the re-presentation of the individual photographs was taken even further. The different drawings were executed in such a way that, as visual interpretations of the images, they do not pertain to particular, identifiable sites. As the depictions are thus impossible to locate, the 'land' cannot be owned and is trans-formed into a shared space. In addition, the border between reality and fantasy is crossed. As fantasy is characterised by notions of possibility, potential, peripeteia, trans-formation and recovery, the terrain also becomes one of flexibility and change.

The notions of movement and inter-action are inherent in the creation of the narrative *Plek* as a re-presentation of the South African terrain as *Vaderland*. The different sites, as texts, are re-moved from their traditional con[text] and re-presented in an[other]. Additionally, I *shifted* from photocopying to scanning to printing – processes of which movement forms an integral part. Furthermore, the use of the computer and the typewriter, as well as the acts of writing and drawing, not only involves the movement or gesture of the hand/s, but also implicates inter-action and touch. As I press the keys on the keyboard of the computer or the typewriter, or as my hand moves across the page in the gesture of either writing or drawing, I symbolically<sup>53</sup> inter-act with and trans-form the sites – creating a spatial play with a terrain characterised by limited movement.

### *Naturalisation and re-presentation*

In the preceding discussion, the South African landscape was considered with regard to the nature of the movements by which marks had been created on the terrain. The discussion of my work was hence also mostly focussed on the *creation* of *Plek*. In the following discussion, the emphasis is shifted from the landscape as a re-presentation, to the re-presentation of the landscape. Considering my own work, I

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<sup>53</sup> In my thinking, the symbolical can be associated with open or un-restricted movement.

will therefore concentrate on the process of *reading* the narrative *Plek*. Additionally, a distinction is made between this narrative and the notion of naturalisation. By using the theories of Ann Bermingham in 'System, order, and abstraction: the politics of English landscape drawing around 1795' (1994:77-101), I will indicate that naturalisation is a means by which a fixed meaning is ascribed to the landscape. Yet in accordance with W.J.T. Mitchell's line of reasoning in *Landscape and power* (1994a), a reading of the narrative *Plek* considers the South African terrain as *Vaderland* with regard to its particular con[text]. As a *re-presentation* and through the juxtaposition of particular images and texts, *Plek* acknowledges the landscape as a medium or as an instrument of cultural power.

According to W.J.T. Mitchell in *Landscape and power* (1994a:5),

[L]andscape is not a genre of art but a *medium*. Landscape is a medium of *exchange* between the human and the natural, the self and the other. ... Landscape is a natural scene mediated by culture (italics mine).

Mitchell also refers to landscape as a 'cultural practice'. Landscape therefore 'doesn't merely signify or symbolize power relations; it is an *instrument* of cultural power, perhaps even an *agent* of power that is (or frequently represents itself as) independent of human intentions' (italics mine) (1994a:1,2).

Regarding the landscape itself, Mitchell (1994a:14) states that it is

a physical and multisensory medium (earth, stone, vegetation, water, sky, sound and silence, light and darkness, etc.) in which cultural meanings and values are encoded, whether they are *put* there by the physical transformation of a place in landscape gardening and architecture, or *found* in a place formed, as we say, 'by nature'.

From this perspective, any visual depiction of landscape is a re-presentation of something 'that is already a representation in its own right' (Mitchell 1994a:14). A



visual depiction of landscape can therefore be considered as a secondary representation.<sup>54</sup>

As the process of mediation is disregarded in landscape *representation*, opportunities for domination and manipulation are created. In landscape representation, the concept of naturalisation denotes such a process in which mediation is concealed. By means of this process, the visual depiction of a particular landscape site is presented as a *reflection* of the selected terrain.<sup>55</sup> From this perspective, the landscape is represented as constituting a mere object used for visual contemplation and interpretation.

Regarding the notion of naturalisation, Ann Bermingham states the following in 'System, order, and abstraction: the politics of English landscape drawing around 1795' (1994:97):

Naturalization denied the sign's arbitrary nature and made it appear to be a pure, immediate, and transparent reflection of the referent. While one would have a difficult time imagining such a linguistic sign or a language composed of them, visual signs could be made to appear to resemble the referent, and for this reason drawing and painting held open the possibility of a universal visual language.

Regarding this particular form of visual depiction, terminology such as *instantly intelligible*, *clearness* and *precision* was used in connection with the arts of drawing, painting and engraving (Bermingham 1994:97). Yet the society at the time was not one of 'leisure, education, and property but one deeply divided by social and political differences' (1994:97). Bermingham (1994:97) refers to this notion of transparency as a 'utopian dream of a natural, universal pictorial language'. This 'dream' was

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<sup>54</sup> The concise Oxford dictionary defines 'represent' as *stand for or correspond to, exemplify, act as an embodiment of, serve or be meant as a likeness of, describe or depict as*. 'Re-present' is defined as *present again*. (1995, s.v. 'represent', 're-present'.)

<sup>55</sup> In my understanding, the notion of naturalisation coincides with the idea of History as an alleged copy or a duplication of the past.



pursued by drawing manuals of the later eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century.<sup>56</sup>

As the society was one permeated with social and political differences, Bermingham proposes that the specific attitudes towards abstraction and order in English landscape drawing at the time had meaning for artistic re-presentation. According to her, these attitudes were embodied in the 'picturesque landscape aesthetic' (1994:78). Landscape design and the procedures and techniques of landscape drawing, were hence restructured according to this aesthetic.

As popular pastimes, gardening and drawing helped to *normalize* a series of attitudes and values by inscribing them within certain representational operations. They functioned as mediums through which social dispositions toward order, power, and meaning found expression in techniques for rendering nature (*italics mine*) (1994:78).

Landscape gardening and drawing were thus not ideologically neutral techniques. Instead in their 'spatial strategies of composition and perspective',<sup>57</sup> they 'actively

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<sup>56</sup> In "Our wattled cot": mercantile and domestic space in Thomas Pringle's African landscapes' (1994:129), David Bunn considers, among other things, the objective of naturalisation in the con[text] of *colonisation*. Bunn (1994:129) specifically uses the example of the frontispiece of François Le Vaillant's *Travels into the interior parts of Africa, by the way of the Cape of Good Hope* (1790), which he regards as 'probably the most widely read eighteenth-century account of travel in the Southern African region and a major best-seller in England'. He states: 'The vegetation has a framing effect, like a proscenium arch; the figure appears to be drawing aside a curtain of bushes, leading the viewer into the landscape and the reader into the book. We are concerned, at such moments, with questions of epistemology and ideology, with the manner in which the presence of a nonindigenous figure in an exotic landscape becomes *naturalized*. ... Colonial space ... is a site of regular ontological shock. It is filled with competing indigenous meaning, a foreign semiotics that does not accommodate class and gender distinctions in the same way, which must consequently be rewritten so that it appears willing to admit colonial appropriations' (*italics mine*) (1994:129).

<sup>57</sup> In *Social formation and symbolic landscape* (c1984:20-22), Denis E. Cosgrove refers to, among other subjects, the relationship between *landscape* and *perspective*. He mentions J.B. Jackson who pointed out the historical parallels between the emergence of the origins of landscape in European painting and the 'development of the modern theatre as a formal art wherein human actions are presented in direct relationship with a designed and controlled environment: "scenes" composed of regulated space and illusory settings' (c1984:20). Cosgrove (c1984:20) further argues that Europeans 'emphasised visual relationships and the *control of space*' in various activities of a similar nature (*italics mine*). An illusion of *order* could thereby be sustained. 'The boundary between reality and fantasy was not clearly defined; in the theatre ... it is consciously obscured. In landscape painting, landforms, trees and buildings could be altered in position and scale, introduced or removed in order to *structure* and *compose* an apparently realistic and accurate scene' (*italics mine*) (c1984:20). According to Cosgrove (c1984:21), landscape painting in fifteenth-century Flanders and northern Italy 'achieved the visual



inscribed or became the sites of specific ideological attitudes and ambivalencies' (1994:78).

In the perspective of some, the English government was based on human nature. Human nature was understood to be 'organic and multidimensional; thus its workings could not be grasped or contained within a single idea or representation' (Bermingham 1994:78). They perceived the British constitution as having 'evolved over the centuries into a body of civil laws, rights, and duties that had been tempered by time, custom, and practical application' (1994:78). The picturesque garden with its 'variety, individuality, and antiquity' was thus comparable to the British Constitution's 'slow and natural evolution' (1994:86). In this regard, an 'amateur gardener', Uvedale Price, stated the following:

A good landscape is that in which all the parts are free and unconstrained, but in which, though some are prominent and highly illuminated, and others in shade and retirement, some rough, and others more smooth and polished, yet they are all necessary to the beauty, energy, effect, and harmony of the whole. I do not see how good government can be more exactly defined (Price in Bermingham 1994:85).

As opposed to the picturesque garden, according to Bermingham (1994:86), the 'Brownian' garden or the 'prospect landscape' became 'a sign if not of French principles then at least of their consequences'. The practice of Lancelot Brown and his followers was 'to clear prospects so as to open views and vistas within the garden to the landscape outside it' (1994:83). A discourse of freedom and imagination was hereby institutionalised in the landscape garden. The notion of this discourse coincided with the attempt of the French Revolution to govern people according to abstract principles. Therefore, whereas individual variety in the landscape was associated with British liberty, levelling tendencies stood for the French Revolution. (1994:78,85.)

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control of space and of the human actions which occur within it'. Yet it was in Italy where spatial control was pre-eminently achieved through a technique of perspective. 'Perspective was regarded not merely as a technique ... but as a *truth* itself, the discovery of an *objective* property of space rather than solely of vision' (*italics mine*) (c1984:21,22).



Terms such as *medium*, *exchange*, *instrument* and *agent* emerged in W.J.T. Mitchell's definitions of the landscape given at the beginning of this discussion. Yet, in the process of naturalisation all notions denoting any form of mediation are concealed. In my understanding, the interaction which inevitably takes place between nature and culture is therefore denied. The landscape is thereby not only reduced to a fixed and autonomous object, but also changed into an instrument of domination and control. From this perspective, the landscape is deprived of inter-readings and inter-action – thus obtaining a fixed meaning. Charles Harrison states in 'The effects of landscape' (1994:204), that

painting [or drawing or engraving] is not just a 'visual art,' that effects are not just visual effects, and that no interpretation can be adequate if it does not recognize what it is that any given painting [or drawing or engraving] significantly *withholds* from vision.

In addition to Mitchell, Denis E. Cosgrove argues in *Social formation and symbolic landscape* (c1984:1) that the landscape idea 'represents a way of *seeing*' (italics mine). From this perspective, it is evident that a process of mediation exists between the notions of *sight* and *site*.<sup>58</sup> In my understanding, the meaning (or the fixed meaning) ascribed to a particular *site* is therefore dependant on the con[text] within which it is perceived. Cosgrove (c1984:13) reasons that '[w]hile landscape obviously refers to the surface of the earth, or a part thereof, and thus to the chosen field of geographical enquiry, it incorporates far more than merely the visual and functional arrangement of natural and human phenomena which the discipline can identify, classify, map and analyse'. Landscape can thus be regarded to carry 'multiple *layers* of meaning' (italics mine) (c1984:13).<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> In "'Our wattled cot": mercantile and domestic space in Thomas Pringle's African landscapes' (1994:127), David Bunn considers the way landscape is 'exported from metropolitan Britain to the imperial periphery'. Bunn regards the representation of the British terrain to depend on an important relationship between *landscape* and *vision*. He considers this relationship to be complicated on the colonial frontier 'because of the association between *sight* and *surveillance*. The African landscape is conceived as a liminal zone between the self and savagery, and rendering things visible is a necessary prerequisite to administrative *control*' (italics mine) (1994:128).

<sup>59</sup> A dis-agreement between the notions of *sight* and *site* is revealed in the ambiguity between the immediate definition of the word 'surface' and that of its etymological tracing. 'Surface' is defined as *the*



According to Cosgrove (c1984:18), the painter's use of landscape implies 'observation by an individual, in critical respects *removed* from it' (italics mine). The landscape as an artwork further enables the viewer 'to remain before the scene or to turn away' (c1984:18). He regards the same to be true 'for the relationship we have towards the real world once we perceive it as landscape' (c1984:18). 'Another way of putting this is that in landscape we are offered an important element of personal *control* over the external world' (c1984:18). From this perspective, Cosgrove (c1984:19) states that it seems inappropriate to 'those who occupy and work in a place as insiders', to apply the term landscape to their surroundings. Instead he proposes the use of the word *place* in this regard. For the 'insider-participant', [he]r place is invested with personal and social meaning which does not necessarily have much to do with its visual form. (c1984:19.)<sup>60</sup>

The composition of their landscape is much more *integrated* and *inclusive* with the diurnal course of life's events – with birth, death, festival, tragedy – all the occurrences that lock together human time and place. ... The element of control which we noted in the relationship implied by the landscape idea is missing ... (italics mine) (c1984:19).

As has already been indicated in the preceding discussion on my work, the process by which the narrative *Plek* was created was permeated with the notions of movement and inter-action. In addition, the box which houses the two books constituting this narrative was designed in such a way that the reader/viewer is guided as to how *Plek* can be read/viewed to enable inter-action and inter-

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*outside of a material body, or as the outward aspect of anything; what is apparent on a casual view or consideration. Yet the etymological tracing of the word exposes connotations with more than mere surface qualities. The word 'surface' is assembled from the prefix *sur-* and the word *face*. The prefix *sur-* is on its part an assimilated form of the prefix *sub-*. *Sub-* is, among other definitions, defined as *at or to or from a lower position* or as *somewhat, nearly; more or less*. The Latin prefix *sub-* is from *sub*, which means *under, close to, towards*. (*The concise Oxford dictionary* 1995, s.v. 'surface', 'sur-', 'sub-'.)*

<sup>60</sup> Susanne Langer suggests the following in a discussion on architectural space: '... a "place" articulated by the imprint of human life must seem organic, like a living form ... . The place which a house occupies on the face of the earth, that is to say, its location in actual space, remains the same place if the house burns up or is wrecked and removed. But the place created by the architect is illusion, begotten by the visible expression of feeling, sometimes called an "atmosphere". This kind of place disappears if the house is destroyed ...' (Langer in Relph c1976:30).



readings.<sup>61</sup> Inside the box, the smaller of the two books is positioned above the other one. Moreover, although the pages of the two separate books differ in length (8,7 cm and 29,7 cm respectively), the pages of the books are the same width (21 cm) (ex. fig. 14). Lastly, as has already been indicated in the earlier discussion on *Plek*, both books consist of twelve concertina-bound pages. The books can therefore literally be read while one is positioned parallel to the other (figs. 14-19). In the case of such a reading/viewing, a particular page is not only juxtaposed with the pages belonging to the same book, but also with those pertaining to the book adjacent to it. Both a horizontal and a vertical reading<sup>62</sup> occur as the eye not only moves from page to page, but at the same time from one book to the other and back again. From this perspective, the narrative *Plek* provides a symbolical space in which *Vaderland* (as a text) is considered with regard to its specific con[text]. A reading of this narrative exposes the ruptures which occur between the notions of *site* – as referring to a particular terrain – and *sight* – as referring to the visual representation of such a terrain and/or to the specific perception maintained of it.

In the drawing which re-presents a barren landscape divided by a fence (figs. 14, 20, 21 & 22), the fencing-pole depicted appears as an intrusion and hence resembles a cut, a gap or a wound. At first sight, the page immediately following this drawing (figs. 14 & 23) seems to be a reflection of the particular re-presentation. On this page, two areas which are constituted by writing are separated by a gap containing a single line of words. In accordance with the depiction of the fencing-pole, this opening bears resemblance to a tear or a rupture. Yet, upon closer observation, when the words are read, the single line of words is revealed as being composed of terms denoting restoration and healing. Additionally, the words which constitute the two larger areas of writing refer to notions of division. From this perspective, the gap is trans-formed into a bridge. Furthermore, when the drawing initially mentioned is

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<sup>61</sup> In my thinking, the box can also be perceived as a womb which the two books share and in which they are protected.

<sup>62</sup> A vertical (as opposed to horizontal) reading conjures up associations with the spiritual realm. From this perspective, I further detect a connection between such a reading and the processes of photocopying and scanning for which light is indispensable and through which a part of the narrative *Plek* was created.



re-considered, the cut or wound is transformed into a scar – being the mark on the skin left after the healing of a wound, burn or sore. In this context, the fence as a means of division or separation becomes a place of association, assembly and fellowship – the place where relationships are formed.

The drawing which re-presents the cultivated fields (figs. 15, 24, 25 & 26) is clearly a visual interpretation. Yet in my thinking, the idea of cultivated land or tith is resembled in the suggestion of lines or rows. From this perspective, the page immediately following this drawing (figs. 15 & 27) appears to be a visual reflection on the particular interpretation. This page depicts two symmetrical columns which consist of writing. Additionally, the positioning of the columns prevents the reader from establishing a focal point. It is instead the gap which appears *in between* the two columns that forms the vertical line in the centre of the page. Upon closer observation, it further becomes evident that the writing which comprises the columns, is constituted of a repetition of the word *geboortegrond* ('native soil', 'native heath'). In addition, the word is frequently interrupted at the right-hand side of the columns and only completed in the subsequent line at their left-hand side. The words *geboorte* ('birth') and *grond* ('ground', 'earth', 'soil', 'land') can hence also be encountered in a reading of this page. In my understanding, the word *geboorte* can be connected to the womb – as the epitome of a shared space, and to both the womb and the lap – as places associated with protection, warmth and nurturing. Yet the narrative *Plek* is a re-presentation of different parts of or encounters with the South African terrain as *Vaderland* – a terrain characterised by the centralisation of the Afrikaner. The particular visual reflection on the cultivated fields symbolically creates a shared space and simultaneously remembers and acknowledges those who were previously marginalised.

In the re-presentation of a man at his house, which was destroyed by government bulldozers in February 1984 (figs. 18, 36, 37 & 38), a heap of ruins is depicted. Additionally, the page immediately following this drawing (figs. 18 & 39) shows a graphic re-presentation of what seems to be a grave. The concept of a grave pertains to notions associated with cessation, death and finality. A grave further resembles a confined space, generally marked by a mound or a boulder subsequent



to a person's burial. From this perspective, the concept of a grave can be connected with division and separation, confinement and limitation, as well as with immobility and silence. Yet, upon closer observation the re-presented grave is revealed to be composed of a repetition of the word *paradys* ('paradise'). In my thinking, the term *paradys* refers to heaven, or to a dreamland or dream-world. *Paradys* thus resembles a place characterised by infinite possibilities and promise, a place where any border can be crossed and every restriction overcome. The word therefore simultaneously denotes movement, inter-action and dialogue. In this con[text], the heap of ruins is trans-formed into a beacon – signifying inter-action, movement and change instead.

Consistent with the preceding discussions on *Plek*, the inter-readings between the re-presentation of part of a dirt road on a farm (figs. 19, 40, 41 & 42) and the page immediately following this drawing (figs. 19 & 43), trans-form the road into a means of unification. Besides the locations which it joins, the road is trans-formed into a bridge through a reading of the word *erbarm* ('have/take pity on', 'compassionate') (fig. 43) – written between two [sur]faces which both consist of the word *eie* ('own'). The road is converted into a means of unification with regard to the [sur]face which it initially appeared to divide.<sup>63</sup>

It is clear from the preceding discussion that the movement inherent in the narrative *Plek* far exceeds the process by which it has been created. Owing to the use of juxtaposition, reading this narrative entails a back and forth movement among the different pages of a particular book, as well as a back and forth movement between the pages of the two books, respectively. Yet it is through juxtaposing the disparate pages that inter-relationships are formed among them. The inevitable discord caused by reading this narrative not only exposes inconsistencies inherent in *Vaderland*, but also instigates friction. This friction occurs among the juxtaposed texts, as well as between these texts and the reader (as a text). From this perspective, a reading of *Plek* coincides with the erosion of *Vaderland* and the

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<sup>63</sup> I did not consider it as crucial to the purposes of this chapter to discuss figures sixteen and seventeen as well.



abrasion of the reader. The narrative *Plek* is thereby a means of symbolically transforming *Vaderland* from *landscape* to *place*.

### *Summary*

In this chapter I have endeavoured to show how movement and limited movement are inherent in the notions of meaning and fixed meaning. From the discussion it has become evident that the idea of limited, controlled or regulated movement coincides with a fixed meaning – literally with regard to *Vaderland* as a demarcated terrain, and figuratively with regard to the concept of naturalisation. Naturalisation, as a process through which a visual depiction is represented as a copy or a duplication of a landscape site, does not acknowledge the interaction between a visual depiction and the artist by whom such a depiction is created. In addition, the reading of such a visual depiction is confined to the depiction and the particular site. Similarly, the idea of movement inevitably coincides with meaning. With regard to the creation of the narrative *Plek*, the emphasis is placed on that which occurs *between* the writer/drawer and the page. With regard to its reading, the emphasis is on that which occurs *between* the reader/viewer and the narrative. Both the concept of the gesture – as deliberated by Tisseron – and the ideas of re-presentation and juxtaposition refer to the inter-action with that which occurs in the *gap* between two or more texts. From this perspective, the notion of *différance* is inherent in the narrative *Plek* and the symbolic inter-action between nature and culture is embraced.

As has been intimated throughout the preceding discussions, knowledge reverts to representation. In the following chapter I will investigate the notions of image and text with regard to the concept of a fixed meaning as coinciding with limited movement – as opposed to the idea of meaning as coinciding with movement.

### **Chapter Three**

#### ***Image and text***

There is no link that could move from the visible to the statement, or from the statement to the visible. But there is a continual relinking which takes place over the irrational break or crack (Deleuze in Mitchell 1994b:83).

We can never understand a picture unless we grasp the ways in which it shows what cannot be seen (Mitchell 1986:39).

It has already become clear from the previous chapters, not only that knowledge is constructed, but also that it is a formation of power. The notion of power has thus been revealed as a relationship which is characterised by a fixed meaning and limited movement. Knowledge – as a form of representation – ultimately refers to such a relationship between words and the con[text]s within which they are used or the particular images conjured up by them, as well as between images and the discourses which constitute the specific con[text]s with which they are associated. In addition, I have suggested that our perception of the world – or of what we perceive as reality – is determined by the nature of the relationships between these images and words or discourses. In this chapter I therefore concentrate on the ideas of image and text, pictures and discourse. By means of the theories of W.J.T. Mitchell, I will indicate that these two concepts are contained within each other – particularly so when the one seems completely absent or invisible in the other. From this perspective, the notion of texts which allegedly exist autonomously – images as images and texts as texts – in other words, texts restricted to a particular con[text], will be exposed as an ideology. Yet, in the discussion of my work, I will show how looking at and reading the narrative simultaneously not only creates inter-action between dispartes, but also establishes movement which shifts or dis-places meaning from one level to an[other]. Additionally, my map-story *Terugbe[taal]* ('re-pay', 're-fund', 'pay back') (figs. 44-52) – as a re-presentation of the Apartheid terrain



– confronts not only the notion of maps as representations of the space we inhabit, but also the idea of History as a comprehensive account of past events.

In *Iconology: image, text, ideology* (1986:42), W.J.T. Mitchell refers to 'pictorial images' as 'inevitably conventional and contaminated by language'. From this perspective, the inter-action between image and text is re-presented as a possibly regressive and corrupting process. Yet Mitchell (1986:43) argues that such a recognition simply implies that the notions of '*ut pictura poesis*'<sup>64</sup> and the sisterhood of the arts is always with us'. The inter-action or inter-play of image and text can be regarded as a constant in culture. What varies, is the particular character of the relationship between the two notions. Mitchell refers to this inter-action as a 'weave' of which the relation of 'warp and woof' changes. (1986:43.)

As the notions of image and text are considered to be involved in a relation of warp and woof, they cannot be approached as binary opposites, regardless of the nature of their inter-action. The idea of binary opposition coincides with Jacques Derrida's concept of logocentrism, whereby the first term is given priority over the second term (Degenaar 1987a:92-94). In the con[text] of logocentrism, notions of mastery, dominance and power [sur]face.<sup>65</sup> Conversely, the process of weaving denotes inter-dependence.

Like the process by which threads are trans-formed into fabric through weaving, the deconstruction of a binary opposition situates the opposition differently. An opposition is not destroyed and changed into a monism by a deconstruction, but undone and dis-placed instead. In this dis-placement, the relationship between the supposed binary opposites is trans-formed. In my understanding, a deconstruction

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<sup>64</sup> *Ut pictura poesis*: 'as in painting, so in poetry' (Mitchell 1994b:220).

<sup>65</sup> I detect a strong correlation between the notion of logocentrism and the concept of peace which was defined as a form of 'unspoken warfare' in Chapter One. As opposed to being involved in a relationship of binary opposition and hence of 'peace' in the case of logocentrism, the notions of image and text 'wage war' in a relation of warp and woof. In *Iconology: image, text, ideology* (1986:47), Mitchell states that '[w]ords and images seem inevitably to become implicated in a "war of signs" (what Leonardo called a *paragone*)'. In my thinking, the 'absence' of such a war therefore denotes power relations and dominance.

of the notions of image and text will create an[other] dynamic with a different status and impact. Yet the construction of this dynamic requires a double movement both inside and outside the previous categories and distinctions. (Culler 1994:150.) From this perspective, the visual and the verbal do not become alienated *from* themselves, but instead alienated *to* each other through inter-action.

### *Image and text*

In a consideration of the theories of Mitchell, it is evident that the relationship between image and text is characterised by a gap. Mitchell defines the image as 'the sign that pretends not to be a sign' (1986:43). By means of this pretence, the image is thus represented as natural immediacy and presence. The word is described as 'its "other," the artificial, arbitrary production of human will that disrupts natural presence by introducing unnatural elements into the world – time, consciousness, history, and the alienating intervention of symbolic mediation' (1986:43). From this perspective, the mimetic image is separated from the expressive image. In addition, pictures of objects are separated from the phonetic alphabet in written language. Both the mimetic image and pictures of objects are given priority over their particular binary opposites. As opposed to their rivals, the mimetic image and the picture are believed to 'look like' or represent<sup>66</sup> the relevant objects in a discussion. (1986:43,44.)

Situating the binary opposition of image and text differently evidently does not presuppose a smooth transition from a con[text] characterised by dominance to one of inter-dependence. Instead the trans-formation resembles a ruptured process of continuous struggle as the warp threads and the weft threads incessantly cross in weaving. Yet, regarding the struggle for dominance between pictorial and linguistic signs, Mitchell (1986:43) states that

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<sup>66</sup> I have intentionally used the word 'represent' as opposed to 're-present'. As has already been indicated in the previous chapter, the word 're-present' denotes a ruptured process, whereas the term 'represent' does not admit to mediation in depiction.



[a]mong the most interesting and complex versions of this struggle is what might be called the relationship of subversion, in which language or imagery looks into its own heart and finds lurking there its opposite number.

Traces of a relationship of subversion between the visual and the verbal dimensions can be found merely by considering the etymological roots of the word 'theory'. According to *The concise Oxford dictionary* (1995, s.v. 'theory'), 'theory' stems from a Greek word which means *look at*. In *Family frames: photography, narrative and postmemory* (1997:14), Marianne Hirsch refers to the word *theoria* which is defined by its etymological roots in terms of visuality. From this perspective, the word is associated with the act of viewing, contemplation, consideration and insight – notions traditionally linked to the image (1997:14). Hirsch (1997:15) suggests that

theory as a form of reflection and contemplation emphasizes mutual implication over domination, affiliation over separation, interconnection over distance, tentativeness over certainty.

Imagery is frequently used in language to explain or clarify that which is communicated. In this con[text], figures of speech such as similes or metaphors are employed to make comparisons and build bridges between divided, independent and often abstract things or ideas. In addition, the parable is defined as 'a narrative of *imagined events* used to *illustrate* a moral or spiritual lesson' (italics mine) (*The concise Oxford dictionary* 1995, s.v. 'parable'). The use of imagery in language therefore often enables us to understand unfamiliar propositions or to simplify complex linguistic constructions.

In *Illuminations* (1970:108), Walter Benjamin provides a revealing perspective on the relationship between the visual and the verbal realms in the con[text] of storytelling:

After all, storytelling, in its sensory aspect, is by no means a job for the voice alone. Rather, in genuine storytelling the hand plays a part which supports what is expressed in a hundred ways with its gestures trained by work.

From this perspective, the very nature of storytelling is constructed from and dependant upon the inter-action of the visual and the verbal. Similar to the way in which the mark-making in writing is reliant on a gesture of the hand, the storyteller is dependant upon gesture in storytelling. Whereas the reader of a novel is isolated, the person listening to a story is in the company of the storyteller (Benjamin 1970:100). In my understanding, a story thus obtains its particular character the moment the visual and the verbal dimensions inter-act. This inter-action takes place as the listener simultaneously listens to and observes the storyteller.

Besides the use of imagery in language, language is also used in imagery. Words are frequently employed to 'paint' the pictures which are conceived mentally or spiritually. Language is also used to enrich visual depictions. In this con[text], language is not considered in terms of explaining or articulating the image. As the image is itself a text (Degenaar 1987a:98-100), I suggest an approach to this relationship whereby language is regarded as *a* text and not necessarily as *the* text which contributes to the creation of meaning in imagery.

Sigmund Freud's approach to the use of language in imagery is problematic in the con[text] of this discussion. Freud considers psychoanalysis to be a science of the 'laws of expression' that 'govern the interpretation of the *mute* image' (*italics mine*) (Mitchell 1986:45). In my understanding, language is hereby regarded as the sole means by which images projected in dreams or in the scenes of everyday life can be analysed. As allegedly misleading and inarticulate pictorial [sur]faces, these images are considered as entirely dependant on verbal connections to acquire significance. From this perspective, there is no reciprocal movement between the notions of image and text. A relationship characterised by dominance is created.

It is evident that the relationship between image and text is trans-formed through inter-action. In the trans-formation, the binary opposition of 'visual' and 'verbal' is changed and dis-placed. In this con[text], a description of the image as a representation, reflection, copy or likeness, is particularly limited. Moreover, as a 'likeness' the image is represented as powerless. Yet, in an acknowledgement of the image as a text, it is revealed as 'linguistic in its inner workings' (Mitchell



1986:43). The image is therefore perceived not only as capable of symbolic mediation, but also as involved in manifold relations and meanings.

### *Pictures and discourse*

From the previous discussion it is clear that the relationship between image and text is characterised by tension and conflict. It has also been indicated that both image and text, as well as the nature of the inter-action between the two notions, are continually trans-formed through this struggle. Simultaneously, a relationship of dominance is opposed as each of the concepts is revealed to be contained within the other. Yet this relationship has meaning beyond the realm of re-presentation. According to Mitchell (1986:43) 'the relationship between words and images reflects, within the realm of representation, signification, and communication, the relations we posit between symbols and the world, signs and their meanings'. From this perspective, I regard it as necessary to consider the relation of pictures and discourse. I will therefore attempt to replace the predominantly binary theory of this relation with a dialectical picture, what Mitchell (1994b:9) refers to as 'the figure of the "imagetext"'.<sup>67</sup>

In *Picture theory: essays on verbal and visual representation* (1994b:4), Mitchell states that "'Word and Image" is a deceptively simple label ... not only for two different kinds of representation, but for deeply contested cultural values'. In this con[text], a connection between the inter-action of images and texts and the issues of power, value and human interest [sur]faces. Mitchell (1994b:5) hereby refers to the relevance of Michel Foucault's claim that 'the relation of language to painting is an *infinite* relation' (*italics mine*). Despite the application of this claim to the formal

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<sup>67</sup> In *Picture theory: essays on verbal and visual representation* (1994b:89), Mitchell specifies his use of particular typographic conventions regarding image and text. The slash is employed to designate 'image/text' as 'a problematic gap, cleavage, or rupture in representation' (1994b:89). The term 'imagetext' on the other hand, designates 'composite, synthetic works (or concepts) that combine image and text' (1994b:89). In the use of a hyphen, 'image-text' designates '*relations* of the visual and verbal' (1994b:89).

matters of image and text, the rift or rupture in re-presentation is also deeply linked with fundamental ideological divisions. These divisions refer to the differences between

the (speaking) self and the (seen) other; between telling and showing; between 'hearsay' and 'eyewitness' testimony; between words (heard, quoted, inscribed) and objects or actions (seen, depicted, described); between sensory channels, traditions of representation, and modes of experience (Mitchell 1994b:5).

In my understanding, the struggle between image and text is deeply embedded in the aesthetic, the political, social and semiotic. The nature of the relationship between the visual and the verbal dimensions will therefore largely determine our understanding of and inter-action with the world.

The pictorial field is understood as 'a complex medium that is always already mixed and heterogeneous, situated within institutions, histories, and discourses: the image understood, in short, as an imagetext' (Mitchell 1994b:98). As the picture is thus regarded as conceived inevitably within a particular con[text], the image is already an imagetext at the moment of its conception. Appropriate texts can therefore be considered as embedded in the image. From this perspective, texts are perhaps most deeply inside the image when they seem completely absent, invisible and inaudible.

Besides the mixed and heterogeneous pictorial field, the visual re-presentations appropriate to a discourse are contained within it:

... they are already immanent in the words, in the fabric of description, narrative 'vision,' represented objects and places, metaphor, formal arrangements and distinctions of textual functions, even in typography, paper, binding, or (in the case of oral performance) in the physical immediacy of voice and the speaker's body (Mitchell 1994b:99).



In my understanding, the full range of possible social relations needs to be taken into account in a consideration of the relation of pictures and discourse. Viewed in this way, the relation of discourse to pictures is infinite and vice versa.

As both pictures and discourse are clearly contained within each other, the notion of purity in this regard appears to be problematic. Purity refers to images and texts which exist autonomously – images as images and texts as texts. Yet, as pictures and discourse are inevitably ‘contaminated’<sup>68</sup> by each other, purity [sur]faces as the intentional exclusion of one from the other. In this con[text], the idea of purity in painting would entail its purging from the blemish of ‘language and cognate or conventionally associated media: words, sounds, time, narrativity, and arbitrary “allegorical” signification are the “linguistic” or “textual” elements that must be *repressed* or *eliminated* in order for the pure, silent, illegible visuality of the visual arts to be achieved’ (italics mine) (Mitchell 1994b:96). Approached in this way, it is apparent that purity is impossible and utopian. This ‘stainlessness’ is thus instead identified as an ideology. In my understanding, purity is constructed from notions of power and interest that serve particular beliefs, values and ideas.<sup>69</sup> (Mitchell 1994b:96.) From this perspective, the disregard of a particular social relation – whether that of a text in the pictorial field or that of a visual re-presentation in discourse – denotes a relation of dominance.

Since it is evident that pictures and discourse are involved in a dialectical relationship, a rejection of the tension in this association refers to the concept of logocentrism. As mentioned earlier, the concept of logocentrism denotes a relation of binary opposition. From this perspective, the favoured term in this opposition is considered to be pure – untainted by its rival. According to Mitchell (1994b:96), this

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<sup>68</sup> ‘Contaminate’ stems from a Latin word which means *touch* (*The concise Oxford dictionary* 1995, s.v. ‘contaminate’). In the con[text] of the word ‘contaminate’ as *touch*, it is related to the notions of tmesis, weaving, abrasion, *abrasar*, *abrazar* and ‘place’ – concepts which were discussed earlier in, or, in some cases, throughout this dissertation. These concepts all denote contact in their particular associations with inter-action, movement and meaning. From this perspective, the word ‘contaminate’ resists any connection with ideas regarding pollution, infection or corruption.

<sup>69</sup> I herein suggest that the inter-action between images and texts, or between pictures and discourse, is of a vernacular nature.

unmixed medium is hence regarded as a radical deviation from the norm 'understood to be impure, mixed, and composite'. Yet the alleged purity of either the particular picture or the specific discourse, allows for the construction of biased knowledge and thereby of a society characterised by dominance.

### *Looking and reading*

With reference to my own work, I will indicate how image and text – or pictures and discourse – are contained within each other in the book *Terugbe[taal]* ('re-pay', 're-fund', 'pay back') (figs. 44-52) – a book comprising a collection of small pages which are covered by various marks. In the light of the preceding discussion, it is evident not only that the book requires both looking and reading, but also that this process involves the entire con[text] or scope of texts concerned at a given time. From this perspective, not only the role of the artist/writer or of the viewer/reader is implicated, but also those issues pertaining to the semiotic, the political and the sociocultural.

*Terugbe[taal]* does not resemble a conventional book. Instead of being bound in the traditional manner, it constitutes a relatively small, loose-page format which is enfolded in linen-covered cardboard. This covering has to be un-folded and thereafter the loose pages removed from it before they can be examined. During this process, an apparently insignificant ritual is performed. Yet, by means of this ritual, the particular viewer/reader (as a text) with all [he]r corresponding texts symbolically confronts this object and also the images it contains. However, before I continue with this specific discussion on the book, I will briefly pay attention to the process by which the work was created.

The pages of *Terugbe[taal]* are covered with marks created through a form of printing called *intaglio*. *Intaglio* is from an Italian word which means *cut*. In this form of printing, the print is taken from a cut in the metal and not from the [sur]face as in letterpress printing. Ink has to be rubbed into all the lines and marks on the plate.



Until a print has been taken, it is impossible to know what character the work done up to that point will take on.<sup>70</sup> (Gross 1973:84.)

The character of *Terugbe[taal]* as an imagetext is already inherent in the con[text] of the particular printing process by which it is created. As *intaglio* means *cut*, the form of mark-making used in this process coincides with the etymological roots of the word 'write'. 'Write' is translated from Old English as *scratch* or *score* (*The concise Oxford dictionary* 1995, s.v. 'write'). From this perspective, the marks which constitute the images of the book can simultaneously be considered as text composed of writing.<sup>71</sup>

In resuming my discussion on the inter-action between the viewer/reader and the book *Terugbe[taal]*, I deem it necessary to consider the notions of both looking and reading. This consideration is done with reference to Alois Riegl's distinction between optics and haptics as two ways of looking which correspond to different types of artistic procedure. In addition to Riegl, Roman Jakobson defined two types of verbal association and verbal creation – the metaphoric and the metonymic. The correlation between the two ways of looking and the two main types of verbal association and verbal creation, is deliberated by Claude Gandelman in the book *Reading pictures, viewing texts* (c1991).

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<sup>70</sup> In *Terugbe[taal]* the simplest form of *intaglio* printing was used. In this form of printing, marks are made directly onto the plate by scratching or scoring it with sharp objects. When the particular design is printed, it is called *drypoint*. (Gross 1973:2.)

<sup>71</sup> Regarding the notion of the imagetext, Mitchell (1994b:95) states that "pure" visual representations routinely incorporate textuality in a quite literal way, insofar as writing and other arbitrary marks enter into the field of visual representation. By the same token, "pure" texts incorporate visuality quite literally the moment they are written or printed in visible form'. In this con[text], Mitchell considers the medium of 'writing' to deconstruct the possibility of a pure image or a pure text, as well as the opposition between letters as 'literal' and pictures as 'figurative'. From this perspective, he argues that '[w]riting, in its physical, graphic form, is an inseparable suturing of the visual and the verbal, the "imagetext" incarnate' (1994b:95).

According to Gandelman, Riegl distinguishes between two ways of looking or between two types of vision: the optical and the haptical.<sup>72</sup> Optical<sup>73</sup> looking corresponds to the scanning of objects according to their outlines, and produces linearity and angularity. Haptical<sup>74</sup> vision focuses on the [sur]faces of objects. Whereas the optical eye merely brushes the [sur]faces of things, the haptic (or tactile) eye penetrates a [sur]face in depth and hence thrives on [text]ure and grain. However, although Riegl was the first to apply the dichotomy of the optic and the haptic to art analysis, the idea of the haptic or of a fusion of the senses of sight and touch, was by no means new. (c1991:5.)

Both René Descartes and George Berkeley treated vision as a form of touching.<sup>75</sup> According to Descartes, the blind see through their hands and hence notice the differences between objects by means of the sense of touch. Berkeley, on his part, regards vision as a synaesthetic operation. He considers vision to be meaningless without the transference of the sense of touch to its operations. Vision as a synaesthetic operation not only enables the viewer to locate and identify objects, but to evaluate [he]r position *in relation to* or [he]r distance from the objects. In my understanding, a relationship is therefore established between the viewer and the object.<sup>76</sup> (Gandelman c1991:5,6.)

As opposed to the haptic eye, 'purely' optical vision is capable only of apprehending points on a plane. Yet, if the linear or angular movements of the eye are traced as it

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<sup>72</sup> Gandelman refers to Riegl's work *Die spaetantique kunstindustrie* (1964) (c1991:162).

<sup>73</sup> The word 'optic' is from the Greek word *optikos*, from *optos*, which means *seen* (*The concise Oxford dictionary* 1995, s.v. 'optic').

<sup>74</sup> The word 'haptic' or 'haptical' is from the Greek word *haptain*, which means *to seize, grasp*, or from *haptikos* which means *capable of touching* (Gandelman c1991:5).

<sup>75</sup> With regard to Descartes, Gandelman refers to the work *La dioptrique* (1902) and with regard to Berkeley, he refers to 'An essay toward a new theory of vision', in *Works on vision* (1963) (c1991:161).

<sup>76</sup> In my thinking, the notion of vision as a synaesthetic operation coincides with the concept of landscape as 'place'. As opposed to the idea of *Vaderland* as 'landscape', which refers to sight in terms of distance and ownership, the notion of 'place' re-presents sight as a synaesthetic operation. 'Place' resembles a terrain of inter-action and *touch* – the land is worked, dwellings are built and the deceased buried. The inhabitant's position is determined *in terms of* or *in relation to* the land – both literally and figuratively.



scans a particular picture or setting, the saccades are revealed as *joining together* the different points of fixation. The saccades are thus capable of establishing *relations* between the various objects or persons visually depicted or observed. (Gandelman c1991:6,7.) Therefore, whereas haptic vision denotes a relationship between the viewer and the object, relations are formed between the different objects or persons by means of optic vision. However, haptic vision is concentrated in the points of fixation between the saccades created by optical vision. Gandelman (c1991:8) describes these points as 'the imprints of the touch of the eye when it ceased to jump with the linear saccades and remained fixed on specific spots'. From this perspective, the optic and the haptic are involved in a dialectical relationship – a relationship of both negation and dialogue between the two poles of the dichotomy. Yet through this dialectical relationship, inter-connections between the viewer and the object, as well as among the various objects are simultaneously established.

In addition to the optic and the haptic as two ways of looking or as two types of vision, Roman Jakobson defined two types of verbal associations and verbal creation in children – the metaphoric and the metonymic.<sup>77</sup>

... one child will proceed through jumps (from the Greek *metaphorein*, 'to carry over') from one paradigm to another (so that, for example, a word like *shack* will be associated to *house* or *skyscraper*), while another child will associate through metonymic contact with a syntactic string (so that *shack* will be associated with a possible syntactic content, such as *has burned down*, *has been built*, *is made of wood*, etc.) (Gandelman c1991:10).

Therefore, whereas the saccades *join together* or establish *relations* between the *different* points of fixation (objects or persons) in optical vision, they establish a type of *bridge* between semantic *disparates* in the case of a metaphorical reading. The saccades therefore enable the viewer/reader to create a re-production and, in my thinking, simultaneously an understanding of reality. (Gandelman c1991:10.) This

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<sup>77</sup> According to Gandelman, Jakobson followed in the footsteps of Ferdinand de Saussure. The metaphoric and the metonymic correspond to the two main axes of language defined in the linguistics of Saussure. (c1991:9,10.)



approach also coincides with the notion of deconstruction according to which 'meaning is the product of the play of differences' (Degenaar 1987a:100). As haptic vision is fixated on [sur]faces, grounds, backgrounds, [text]ure and colouring instead, it is understood to read a visual depiction or a setting nonsemantically or metonymically. Such a reading does not proceed by means of 'jumps' between dispartes, but rather through 'touching' and contact, in other words by means of connected and related attributes and characteristics between associations. (Gandelman c1991:10.) In my understanding, the character of a metonymical reading is therefore summarised in its etymological root which is translated from Greek as *name* (*The concise Oxford dictionary* 1995, s.v. 'metonymy'). Unlike a metaphorical reading, a metonymical reading is an index to and not a resemblance of reality. According to Gandelman all associations, whether with regard to a text or a visual depiction, proceed along these two antithetical lines – metaphor and metonymy. (c1991:10.)

As the viewer/reader un-folds the covering which encloses the numerous loose pages constituting the book *Terugbe[taal]*, s[he] is confronted with a pile of deckled-edged pages of 15,5 x 11 cm each.<sup>78</sup> Paging through the book resembles an intimate process and requires time, as the pages are often difficult to separate from each other. Yet the process of reading this work is not limited to the turning of its pages. The pages can also be laid out on a flat [sur]face, significantly changing the reader's inter-action with the book. Apart from being able to take in the entire work at a glance, the reader is thereby physically removed from the pages. [He]r looking/reading therefore takes place at a distance.

The pages of *Terugbe[taal]*<sup>79</sup> conjure up associations with maps (figs. 44-47). Numerous crosses, small marks of different shapes and sizes, as well as lines and collections of marks denoting dotted lines can be detected. Yet, as a reading of this

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<sup>78</sup> For practical purposes, I have only included a few examples of the pages from the book in this dissertation.

<sup>79</sup> As the book constitutes a loose page format, the reader will most likely intervene with the particular order in which the pages are found when removed from the box.



book proceeds, the pages become lighter in tone and less detailed (figs. 48-50). The marks are more thinly scattered and particular blotches of ink become prominent. When the reading is pursued towards the last pages of the book, very little is easily discernible and only a few marks are detected from a distance (figs. 51 & 52).<sup>80</sup>

The associations with regard to maps are numerous and diverse. Of the most obvious connections are those with the age-old traditions of mapmaking and cartography. Maps were also utilised to mark the specific seaways along which spice traders navigated their voyages between the East and the West. In addition, although the early maps were often particularly limited in accuracy, they provide us with insight into the perception which the people had of the world at the time. Maps are further used in schools to provide children with an awareness and an understanding of their place or position in terms of the bigger scheme of things – whether literally or figuratively. They are indispensable in history, essential for tourism and travelling and for the planning of leisurely trips to unfamiliar destinations. Maps provide direction and identify places. In conjunction with modern technology, maps are used on site to locate areas of safety and danger. Maps are figuratively referred to as providing direction – as a means by which straying is prevented. In many stories, fables and fairy tales, maps are the sources of treasures which will be found only by the one in possession of, or with the ability to decipher and/or *read* the particular map.

As the Afrikaner was the Author of South African History during the reign of the Apartheid Regime, the particular maps in circulation at that time represented his interests and therefore denote division and power. The History textbooks used in schools at the time of Apartheid were full of maps of this nature. These maps represent stories of colonisation, they depict the course of The Great Trek in immense detail, refer to the Anglo Boer War and portray the numerous border wars which took place in the Eastern Cape from the perspective of the Afrikaner. In this

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<sup>80</sup> According to *The concise Oxford dictionary* (1995, s.v. 'map') the word 'map' can be defined as *a usu. flat representation of the earth's surface, or part of it, showing physical features, cities, etc.* or as *a two-dimensional representation of the stars, the heavens, etc.*

con[text], the maps resemble a diary of the trials and tribulations of the Afrikaner – of events in which he triumphed over his opponents and emerged as victor, or in some cases as victim. The construction of these maps revolved around the Afrikaner as the *norm* and the *core* of Apartheid society.

Maps are undoubtedly con[text]-dependant. Apart from traditionally being constructed from both image and text, maps are created within a particular con[text].

The conventional view is that a picture is a map when it resembles the world in miniature and the 'better' it resembles the world (i.e. the more accurate it is), the better a map it is. Denis Wood has argued differently: that the authority of a map is not derived from its accuracy, but from the authority of the person who draws it. A picture is a map when it is drawn by someone with the authority to draw maps (Dorling & Fairbairn 1997:71).

The term 'accuracy' is replaced by the word 'authority'.<sup>81</sup> From this perspective, maps are not representations of the space we inhabit, but instead representations of the particular relationship between this space and those in authority – between picture and discourse. In this con[text], the emphasis is shifted to *how* and *for whom* a specific space is mapped (1997:vii).<sup>82</sup> In my thinking, as maps are thus revealed as possible instruments of cultural power, it is essential to consider the map – as a text – with regard to its specific con[text].

In the 'Introduction' of *Mapping: ways of representing the world* (1997:3), Daniel Dorling and David Fairbairn refer to mapping and map-making in terms of their contribution to '*human activity*' and to '*peoples' everyday lives* around the world' (italics mine). Additionally, mapping is described as 'representing space and

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<sup>81</sup> The shift in emphasis from 'accuracy' to 'authority' coincides with the idea that knowledge and power – as discussed in Chapter One – are interrelated.

<sup>82</sup> According to Dorling and Fairbairn in *Mapping: ways of representing the world* (1997:68), '[t]he outline of each country is a potent political symbol. Only rarely is this completely a physical feature such as the coastline. It is usually a political artefact. Not only do boundaries give the country a shape, but they suggest a uniformity within that shape which *separates* it from the outside, from what is alien or foreign' (italics mine).



*location*<sup>83</sup> (italics mine) (1997:3). A distinction is further made between the process of *map-making* as opposed to *mapping* – the former as referring to '[t]he physical creation of maps which embody the "world-view" of ... societies' and the latter to the 'mental interpretation of the world' (1997:3). Maps are accordingly revealed as symbolic representations of the relationship between nature and culture, between the terrain and its inhabitants, between image and text. In my understanding, maps therefore also tell stories concerning the lives of people with regard to the spaces which they inhabit. Yet, as maps are drawn by those in authority, the stories they tell will pertain to the stories (or rather to the [hi]stories) of, or be from the perspective of, those in authority.

As opposed to traditional maps as alleged representations of the spaces we inhabit, the prime purpose of the *mappae mundi*<sup>84</sup> was not to show location. Rather, the major role of some of these maps was to relate a narrative, usually with a historical theme, demonstrating the dominion of Christ over the face of the earth. In addition, a large number of *mappae mundi* depict other legends and fables. (Dorling & Fairbairn 1997:13,14.) From this perspective, the *mappae mundi* create a symbolical space or re-present a metaphysical space in which various narratives pertaining to experiences, to the imaginary and to the spiritual intersect.

As opposed to traditional maps as alleged copies or duplications of the space we inhabit, the book *Terugbe[taal]* is a re-presentation of the Apartheid terrain. The main purpose of this book is not to show location, but rather to tell a story. According to Walter Benjamin in *Illuminations* (1970:91,92), storytelling (like re-presentation)

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<sup>83</sup> The word 'location' is defined by *The concise Oxford dictionary* (1995, s.v. 'location') as a *particular place; the place or position in which a person or thing is*. In addition, with regard to the con[text] of Apartheid South Africa, the term refers to *an area where blacks are obliged to live, usu. on the outskirts of a town or city*.

<sup>84</sup> *Mappae mundi* is the Latin name for 'maps of the world' – produced from AD 400 to AD 1450 (Dorling & Fairbairn 1997:13).

does not aim to convey the pure essence of the thing, like information or a report. It sinks the thing into the life of the storyteller, in order to bring it out of him again. Thus traces of the storyteller cling to the story the way the handprints of the potter cling to the clay vessel. Storytellers tend to begin their story with a presentation of the circumstances in which they themselves have learned what is to follow ...

In addition, Benjamin (1970:93) describes storytelling as

that slow piling one on top of the other of thin, transparent layers which constitutes the most appropriate picture of the way in which the perfect narrative is revealed through the *layers of a variety of retellings* (italics mine).

A story can hence be regarded as the *product* of a *collection of re-tellings*. Yet this 'product' is trans-formed with every added re-telling. From this perspective, a story not only constantly changes, but it is also dependant on change. Similarly, a reading of the map-story *Terugbe[taal]* reveals this narrative to be a palimpsest.<sup>85</sup> As a particular re-telling of a story retains the previous re-tellings, each page of the map-story *Terugbe[taal]* bears the traces of the pages which preceded it in the printing process. A reading of *Terugbe[taal]* therefore moves the reader/viewer not only from mark to mark and from page to page, but also from re-telling to re-telling, from experience to experience, perspective to perspective, person to person. Concurrent with the viewer's movement among the different points of fixation, *relations* are also established between the private and the public, the personal and the collective, near and far, past and present, fact and fiction, reality and fantasy.

Additional to the way in which a story itself (as the product of a collection of re-tellings) is dependant on movement and change, these notions are also inherent in a story (as referring to a particular re-telling or to the specific version of a story) as far as the succession and gradual change of its narrated events are concerned. Similarly, the successive and gradually changing pages of the book *Terugbe[taal]* suggest that something is happening. Reading this map-story slowly takes the

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<sup>85</sup> The word 'palimpsest' is defined as *a piece of writing material or manuscript on which later writing has been written over the effaced original writing* (*The concise Oxford dictionary* 1995, s.v. 'palimpsest').



reader/viewer back to the earlier (figs. 48-50) and eventually to the initial (figs. 51 & 52) stages of the *intaglio* process by which the drypoints were created. The pages gradually become less detailed and lighter in tone as the reading proceeds.

The thinly scattered marks and prominent blotches of ink pertaining to the drypoints which constitute the earlier phases of the creation of *Terugbe[taal]* (figs. 48-50), conjure up associations with the constellations and subsequently with various notions concerning the firmament: by means of the sun, the moon and the stars did the early seafarers determine direction; in direct correlation with the attraction of the moon and the sun, the cyclic rise and fall of the ocean is produced; by means of the planets, myths and legends are conceived; viewed scientifically, the sun is considered to be a source of light, energy and life. In addition, the celestial symbolises infinity. It is associated with dreams, with the spiritual realm and immortality. From this perspective, it becomes clear that the movement inherent in a reading/viewing of the map-story *Terugbe[taal]* does not pertain only to the land or to the physical realm.

As the reading is pursued towards the 'last' pages of the book (figs. 51 & 52), only a few inconspicuous marks can be detected – the marks largely subsisting by means of the background. Although these pages constitute the last and most recent few pages in a reading of this narrative, they simultaneously comprise the initial drypoints created in the *intaglio* process.<sup>86</sup> The pages are consequently also tonally lighter than those preceding them, shifting the emphasis to the tonal value of the narrative which has gradually been decreasing.

Whereas later writing is written over the *effaced* 'original' writing in the case of a palimpsest, or while the more recent scratches on a copperplate tend to hold more ink,<sup>87</sup> the pages towards the end of the map-story instead become lighter in tone.

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<sup>86</sup> A reading of the map-story hence coincides with a symbolical journey to the past.

<sup>87</sup> According to Anthony Gross in *Etching, engraving, and intaglio printing* (1973:2), in all drypoint methods, 'whether by scratching or by making the embedded mark, a roughness is also thrown up which will print either weakly or strongly according to the amount of ink it holds. This roughness above



From this perspective, a reading of *Terugbe[taal]* coincides with the gradual erasure of the marks from the various pages. Yet, in my thinking, the effacing actually takes place *because of* the reading process or inter-action as the reader's eyes graze or scuff the [sur]face of every page. Additionally, the friction created inevitably generates heat which accumulates as the reading proceeds. The continuous rubbing of the reader's eyes against the pages therefore does not simply erase marks, but eventually ignites or lights the pages. According to *The concise Oxford dictionary* (1995, s.v. 'light'), the word 'light' is, among other definitions, described as *mental illumination; elucidation, enlightenment, as hope and as spiritual illumination by divine truth*. 'Light' is hence synonymous with the concept of revelation – the direction which a reading of the map-story provides *beyond* that related to movement on the land. In this con[text], whereas the movement associated with traditional maps is restricted to that pertaining to the material, a reading/viewing of the map-story *Terugbe[taal]* moves the reader/viewer not only from place to place, but also from the physical to the spiritual realm – a place of dis-placement, change and transformation.

Imprinted on the last page of the book is the title of the work: *Terugbe[taal]* ('re-pay', 're-fund', 'pay back'). Yet viewed/read against the backdrop of the preceding viewing/reading of the artwork, the word evidently does not refer to a financial transaction. This notion is further emphasised by the way in which the word is treated typographically. The word *taal* (language) is highlighted through the use of square brackets. From this perspective, it is clear that a process of compensation is suggested, but also that it occurs by means of language, or, more comprehensively stated, by means of text – by means of word and image, through *reading* and *looking*. Only by *reading and looking* and by *inter-acting* with the map-story *Terugbe[taal]* – as a re-presentation of the Apartheid terrain – can the reader/viewer gradually return to the past and symbolically trans-form or *redeem* the land. Simultaneously, the reader/viewer is incessantly dis-placed through this process until

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the surface of the plate is called a "burr", and is the main characteristic of drypoint. If the roughness or burr is removed very little of the mark will print on the paper'. In my experience, a particular burr is gradually removed as the plate is repeatedly put through a printing press.



s[he] is moved *beyond* the past to the spiritual realm – a place of atonement and healing which could be neither inherited nor owned.

It is clear from the preceding discussion that a reading of the map-story *Terugbe[taal]* is dependant on an interpretation of this work – as a text – within a particular con[text]. From this perspective, the meaning ascribed to the narrative includes not only those texts outside the artwork, but also those preceding it – consisting of (among other things) the background, history, values and beliefs of both the artist/writer and the viewer/reader of the book. In addition, as meaning is constructed from the inter-action or inter-play between text and con[text], it is of a temporal nature and hence in a state of continuous trans-formation as con[text]s inevitably change. *Terugbe[taal]* therefore not only has meaning beyond the realm of re-presentation, but by means of symbolic mediation also has the ability to dis-place, trans-form, heal and redeem.

### *Summary*

In this chapter I have indicated that all re-presentations involve the inter-action of image and text. This particular form of inter-play or movement has further been revealed to exceed the realm of visual re-presentation and hence to simultaneously occur amongst the semiotic, the political and the sociocultural – traditionally regarded to constitute that which only exists *outside* a work. The relationship between word and image therefore reflects the relations we posit between symbols and the world, signs and their meanings (Mitchell 1986:43). Thus meaning is culture-specific, or, as has been indicated throughout this discussion and those discussions preceding it, bound to a particular con[text].

The inter-action between word and image includes the reader/viewer (as a text) which on its part inevitably affects the reading/viewing of a work. Just as reading additionally involves the pictorial, imagery, the imagination, the spiritual and dreams, viewing involves the linguistic and words. By means of this simultaneous reading and viewing, differences and similarities are identified and connections established

with regard to the relevant texts. The visual or verbal is thus understood in terms of its allegedly binary opposite. From this perspective, a relationship of dominance is opposed, as well as a continuous, reciprocal movement and inter-relations established, as the perception of the one is dependant on the other.



## ***Postscript***

As a re-presentation of the past, my work is not an attempt to provide a supposedly accurate description, copy or duplication of historical events. It is instead an endeavour both to confront and to re-w[rite] [Hi]story through disrupting the allegedly systematic and chronological order which characterises the construction of its events. The viewer/reader of my work is thus obliged to move backwards and forwards continuously among the innumerable, dis-orderly texts involved – inevitably coinciding with a state of erraticism, instability and volatility. Yet it is by means of this dis-order or chaos and the relentless movement that its viewing/reading entails, that meaning is created and a fixed meaning, notions of centralisation and power relations opposed.

The various books constituting the practical body of work – each in its own way – resemble a conglomeration of words, images and/or marks. The viewer/reader is therefore compelled to move among the juxtaposed texts in random fashion so as to *create* meaning. Thus meaning does not precede language or exist independently of it (Degenaar 1987a:92), nor does it pertain to a fixed or intended significance, but rather to those features or qualities marking the inter-action of texts within a particular con[text]. The way in which my work is structured therefore establishes the notion of meaning as dynamic, constantly emergent and continually in motion on the one hand, and on the other as coinciding with a form of contact or touch.

Similar to the way in which meaning is created through both movement and inter-action, a match is lit by means of friction. Yet as the extent to which a dark chamber or cave is revealed depends on the number of torches or candles lit inside, the degree of truth and clarity (or meaning) with regard to a particular text is in direct correlation with the number of inter-actions with, perspectives on or interpretations of the relevant text which are accommodated at the specific point in time. In addition,

any mark – whether referring to a drawn or written mark, to a footprint or to the chipped bark of a tree – signifies either a gesture of the hand, a movement of the body or of a particular animal or object, as well as an inter-action between the surfaces involved. However, as a drawing or writing comprises numerous marks and, as a specific mark obtains significance in relation to both its similarity to and difference from those marks in its proximity, a tracker is also able to provide guidance relative to the number of traces encountered from those left behind by the object of [he]r pursuit. Only if considered collectively do such traces tell a story and do they provide direction. Meaning is therefore never complete, but as a notion which is con[text]-bound, incessantly trans-formed as con[text]s continually change.

The spaces between the numerous words, images and marks, the pauses or silences which occur as the pages of my books are turned or folded and as the lid of a particular box is removed, as well as the distances between the books themselves are not gaps, breaks or separations. These so-called pauses, silences and distances instead are bridges by which connections are formed, shared spaces in which dialogue occurs, terrains on which inter-action takes place, receptive and accessible cavities or wombs in which meaning is conceived. Because of these spaces, the personal and the collective, the private and the public, the individual and the universal are able to cross and inter-connect.

Created due to the juxtaposed texts, the spaces allow every viewer/reader to construct [he]r own meaning from the various ambiguities. The notion of truth obtains a supple character as it varies from viewer to viewer and from reader to reader – merely pertaining to the particular con[text] within which it is created. From this perspective, the idea of movement is not only inherent in the creation of meaning and in the resistance of restriction and delimitation, but also synonymous with the concept of loss. It is by means of movement that the self or a specific meaning related to a text is not preserved, but instead continuously re-considered, re-constructed and therefore trans-formed. Yet, similar to the process of pruning, this loss is exactly that which enables redemption – a new beginning.



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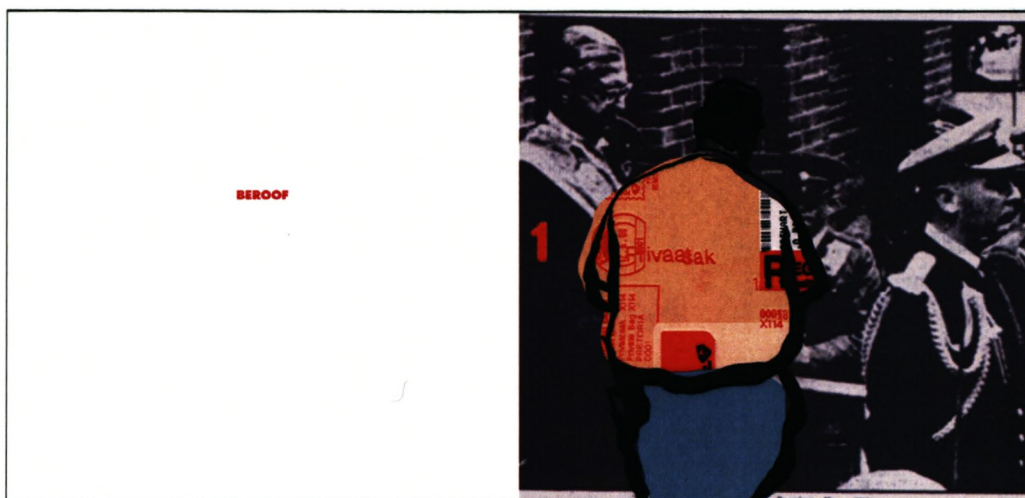
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***Illustrations***



**Fig. 1. Mariëtte Ligthart, *Skoot* (2001). Digital print, 19 x 40 cm.**

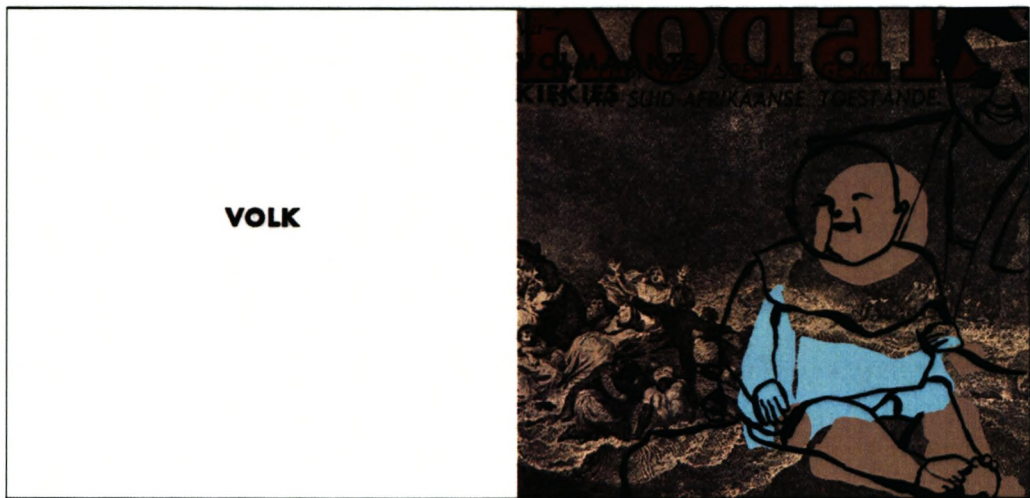
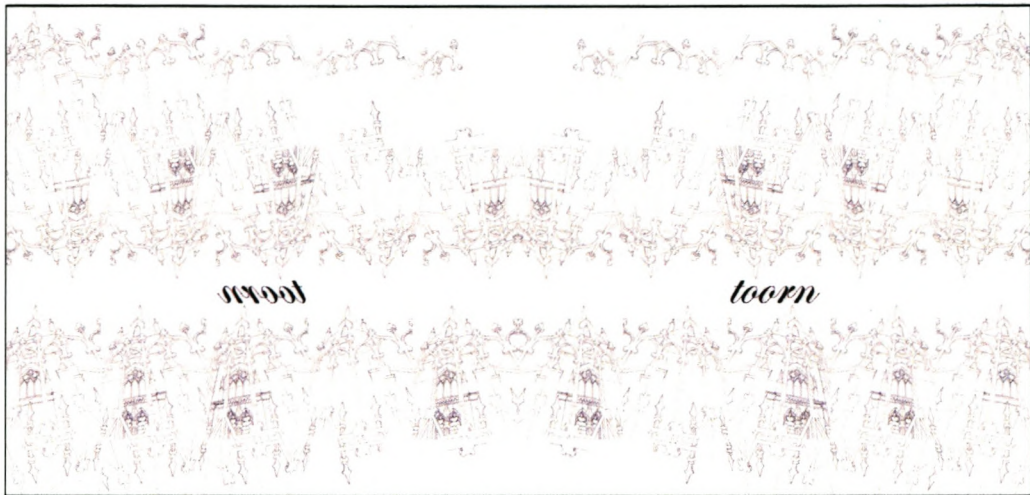


Fig. 2. Mariëtte Ligthart, *Skoot* (2001). Digital print, 19 x 40 cm.



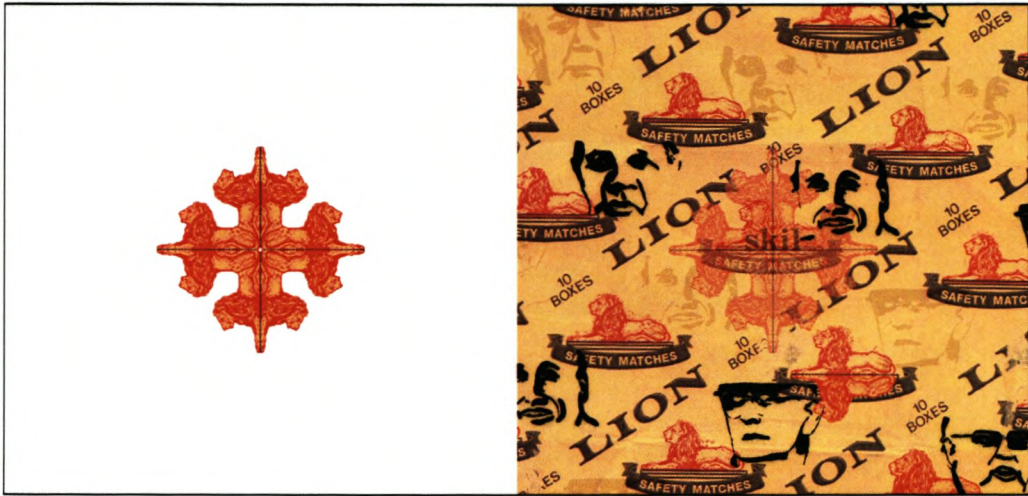


**Fig. 3.** Mariëtte Ligthart, *Skoot* (2001). Digital print, 19 x 40 cm.



**Fig. 4. Mariëtte Ligthart, *Skoot* (2001). Digital print, 19 x 40 cm.**





**Fig. 5. Mariëtte Ligthart, *Skoot* (2001). Digital print, 19 x 40 cm.**

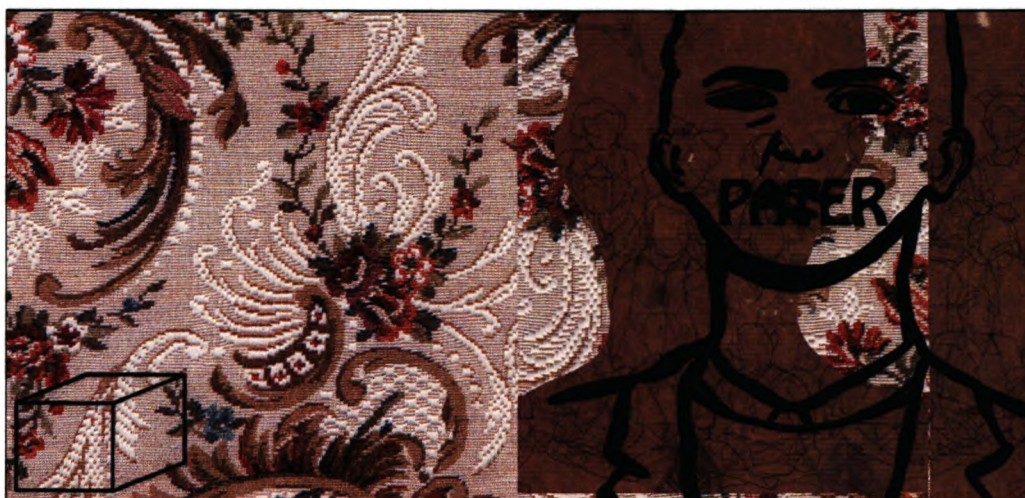


Fig. 6. Mariëtte Ligthart, *Skoot* (2001). Digital print, 19 x 40 cm.



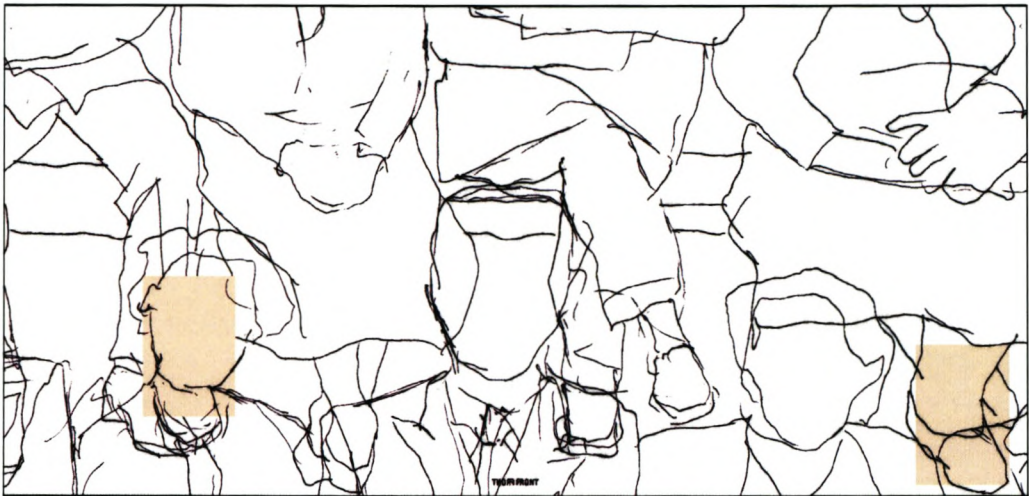


**Fig. 7. Mariëtte Ligthart, *Skoot* (2001). Digital print, 19 x 40 cm.**



**Fig. 8.** Mariëtte Ligthart, *Skoot* (2001). Digital print, 19 x 40 cm.





**Fig. 9. Mariëtte Ligthart, *Skoot* (2001). Digital print, 19 x 40 cm.**

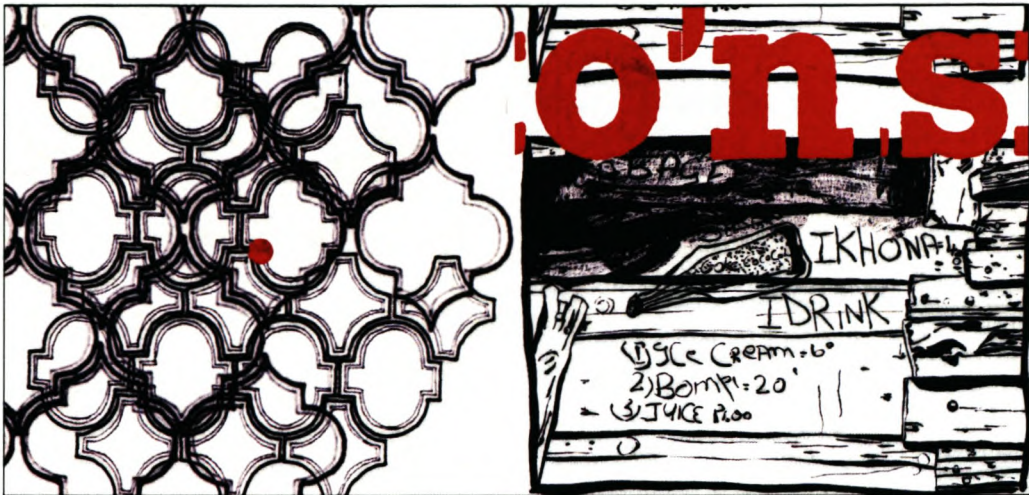


Fig. 10. Mariëtte Ligthart, *Skoot* (2001). Digital print, 19 x 40 cm.





Fig. 11. Mariëtte Ligthart, *Skoot* (2001). Digital print, 19 x 40 cm.



Fig. 12. Mariëtte Ligthart, *Skoot* (2001). Digital print, 19 x 40 cm.



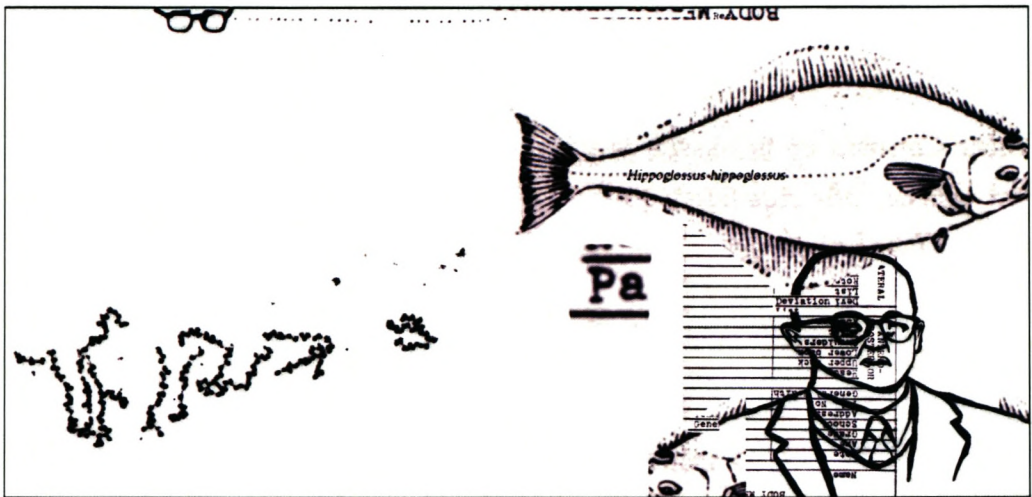
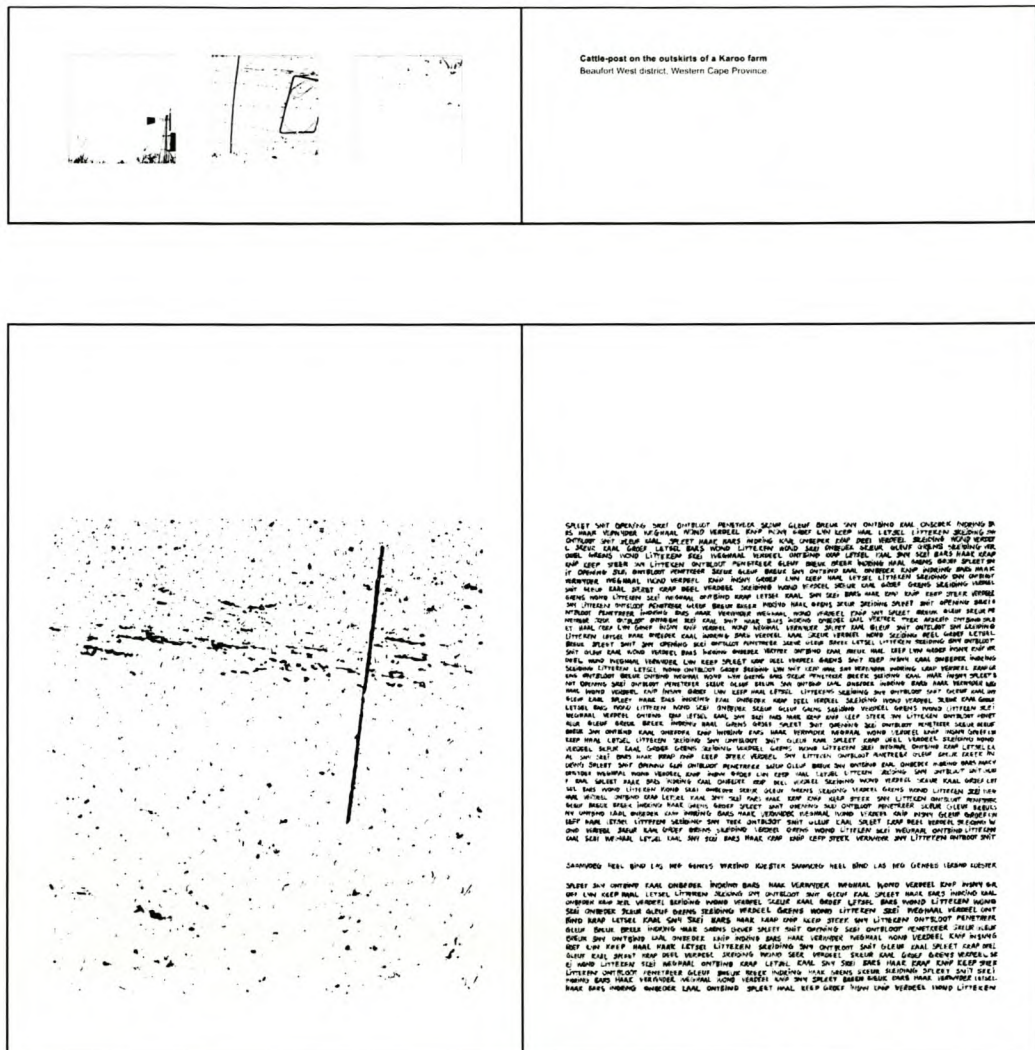
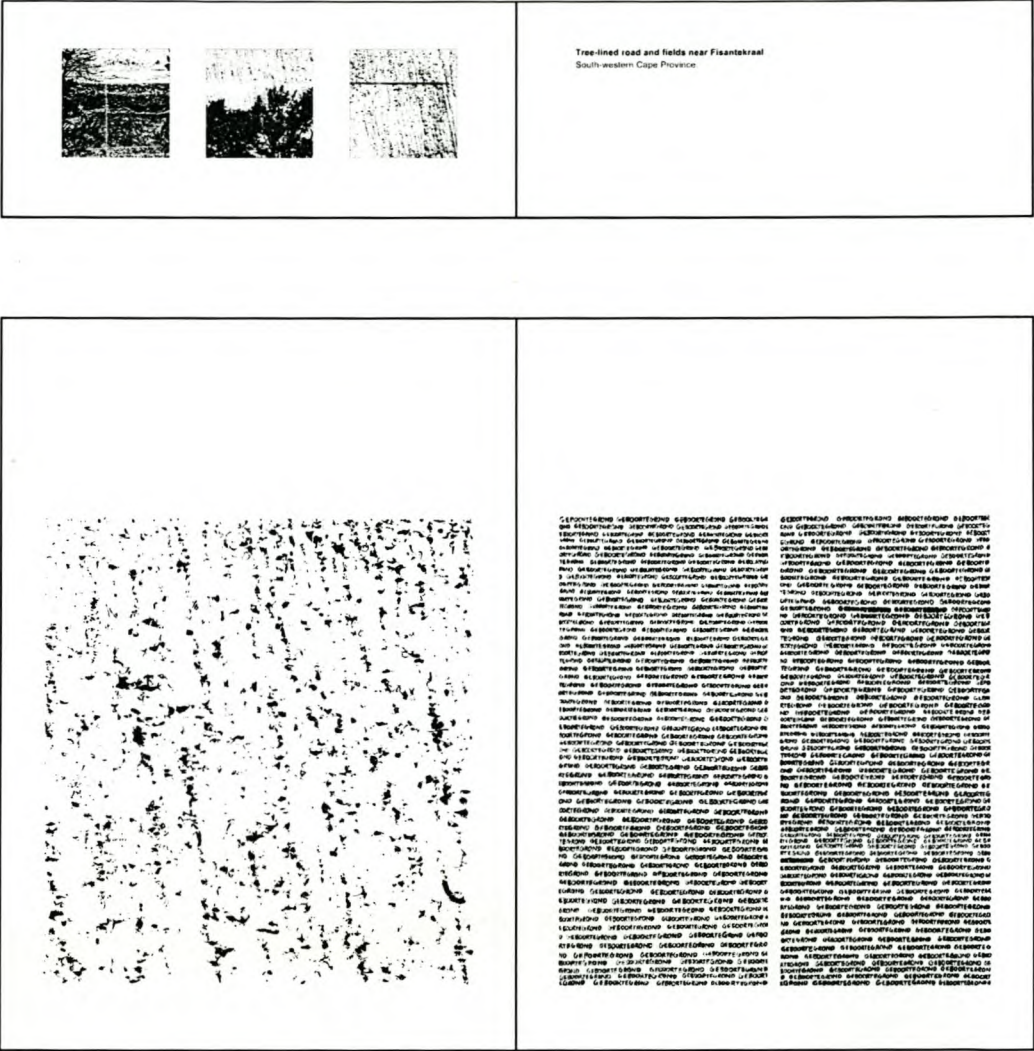


Fig. 13. Mariëtte Ligthart, *Skoot* (2001). Digital print, 19 x 40 cm.



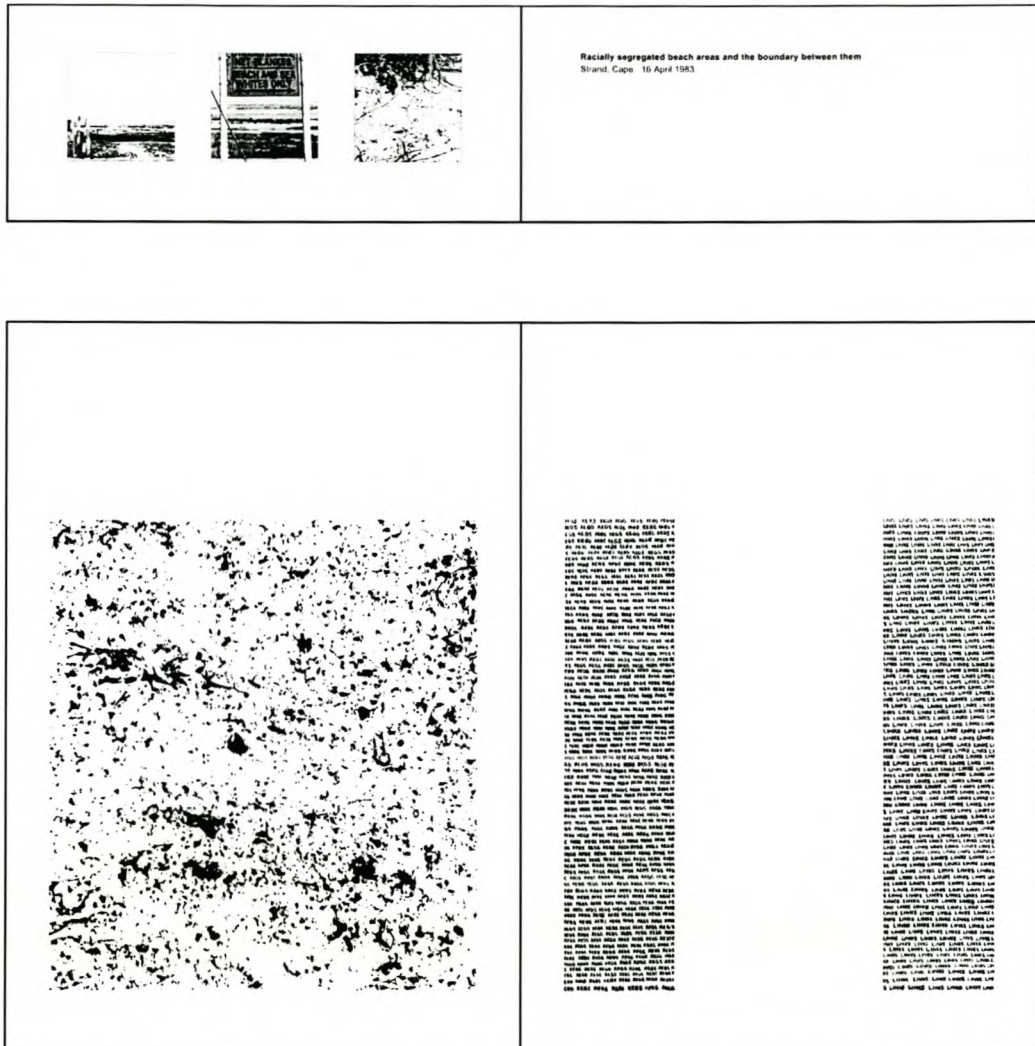
**Fig. 14. Mariëtte Ligthart, *Plek* (2002). Digital print.**





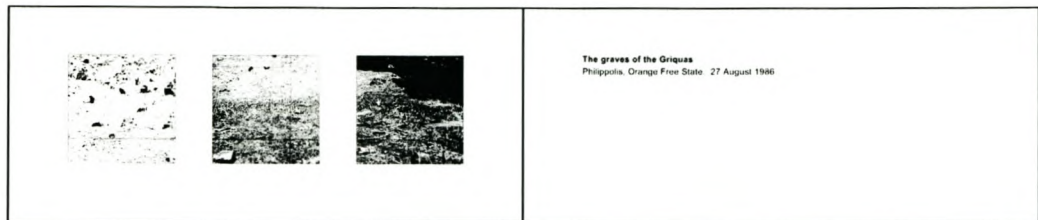
Tree-lined road and fields near Fisantekraal  
South-western Cape Province

Fig. 15. Mariëtte Ligthart, *Plek* (2002). Digital print.



**Fig. 16. Mariëtte Ligthart, *Plek* (2002). Digital print.**





**Fig. 17. Mariëtte Ligthart, *Plek* (2002). Digital print.**

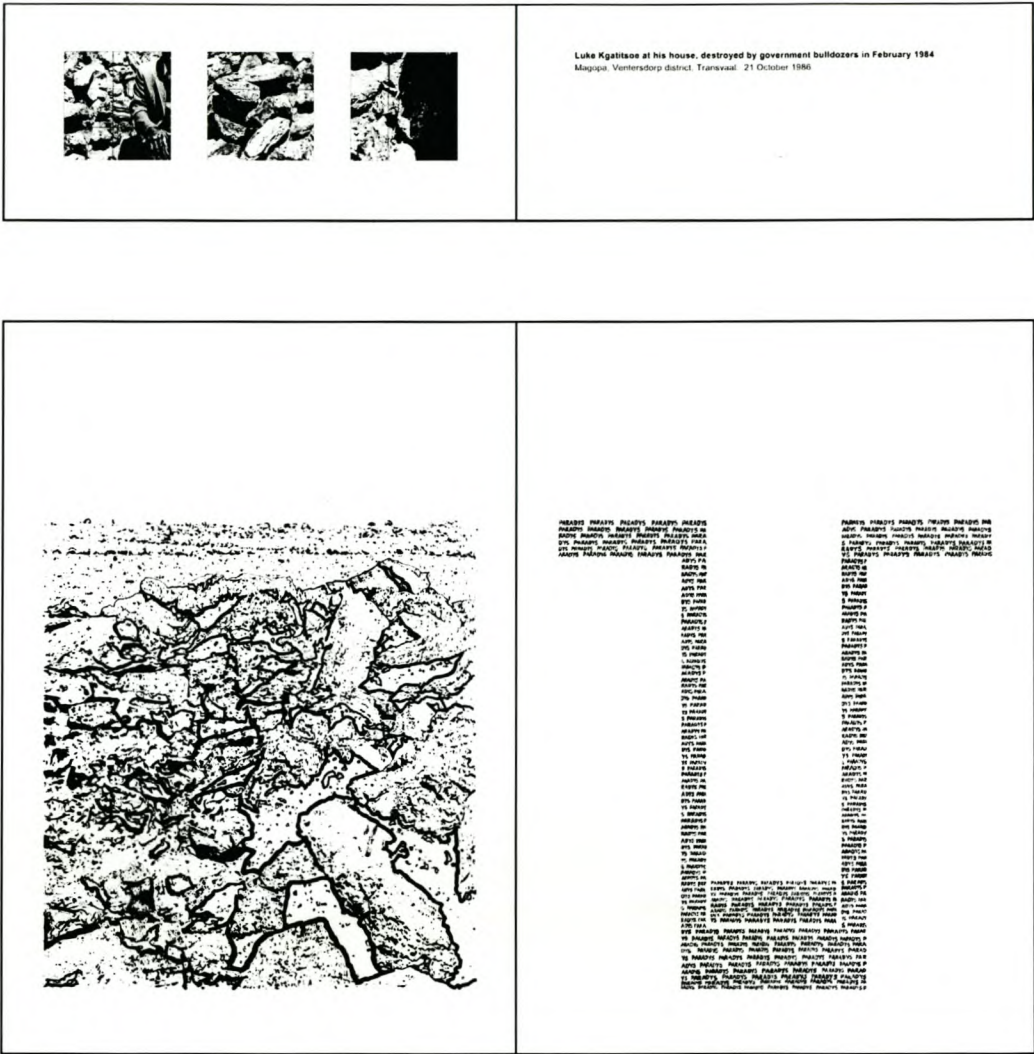


Fig. 18. Mariëtte Ligthart, *Plek* (2002). Digital print.



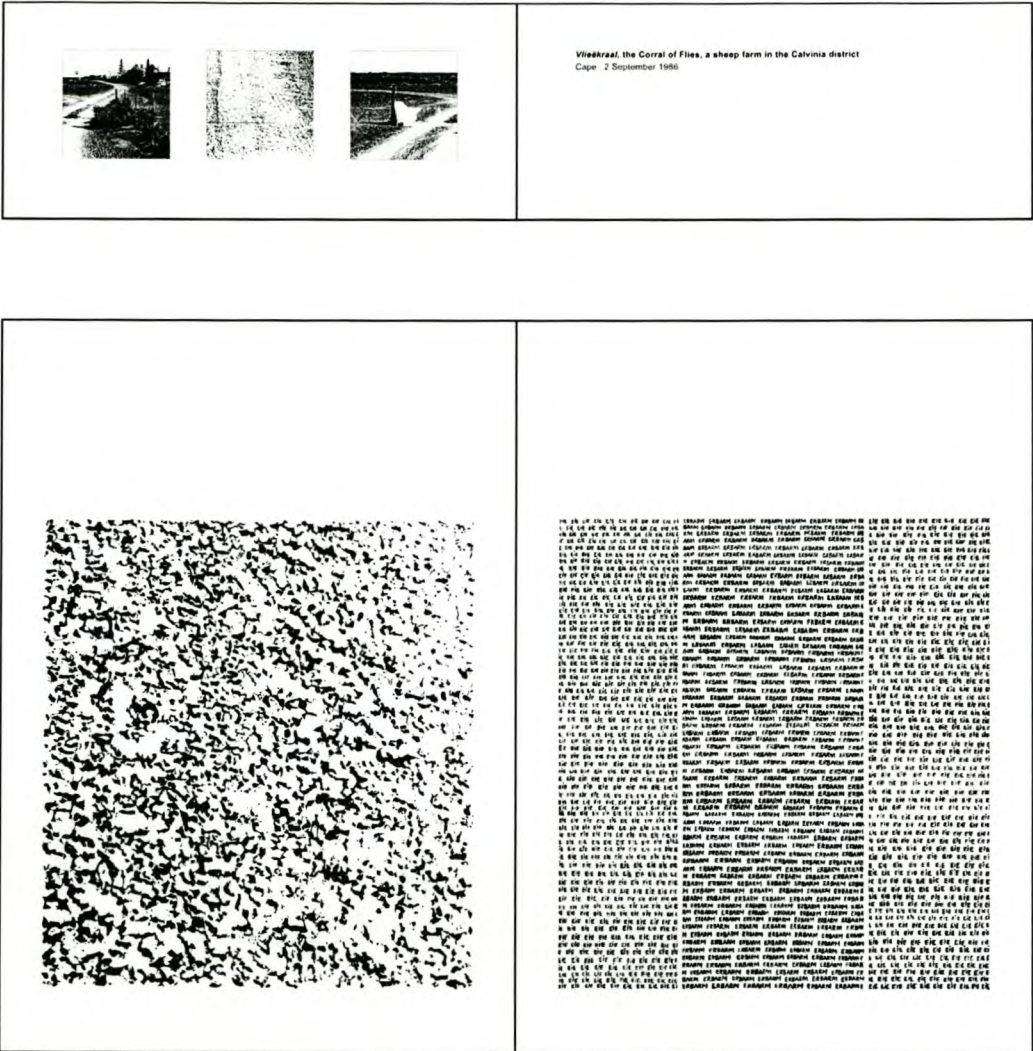
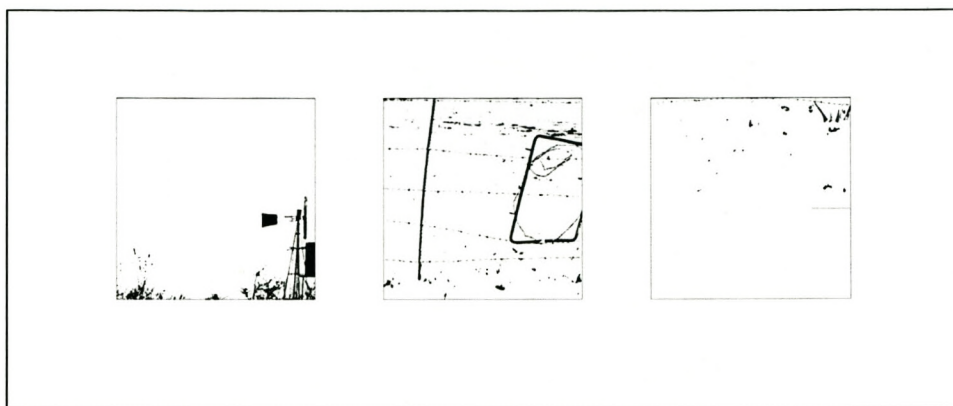
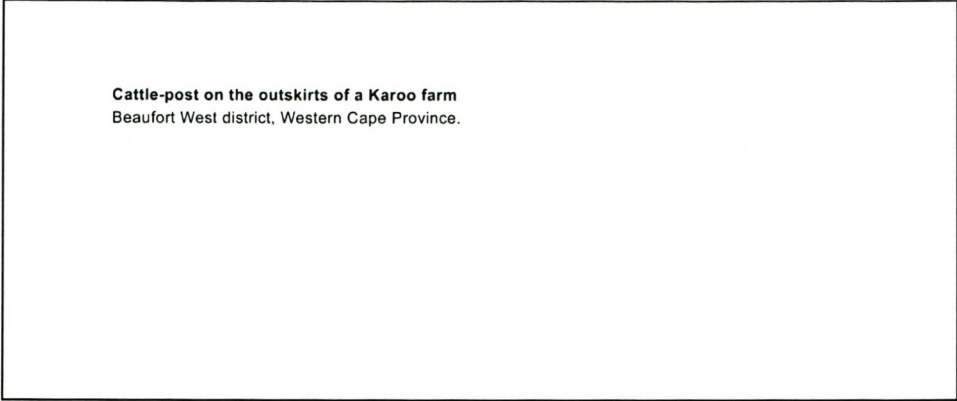


Fig. 19. Mariëtte Ligthart, *Plek* (2002). Digital print.



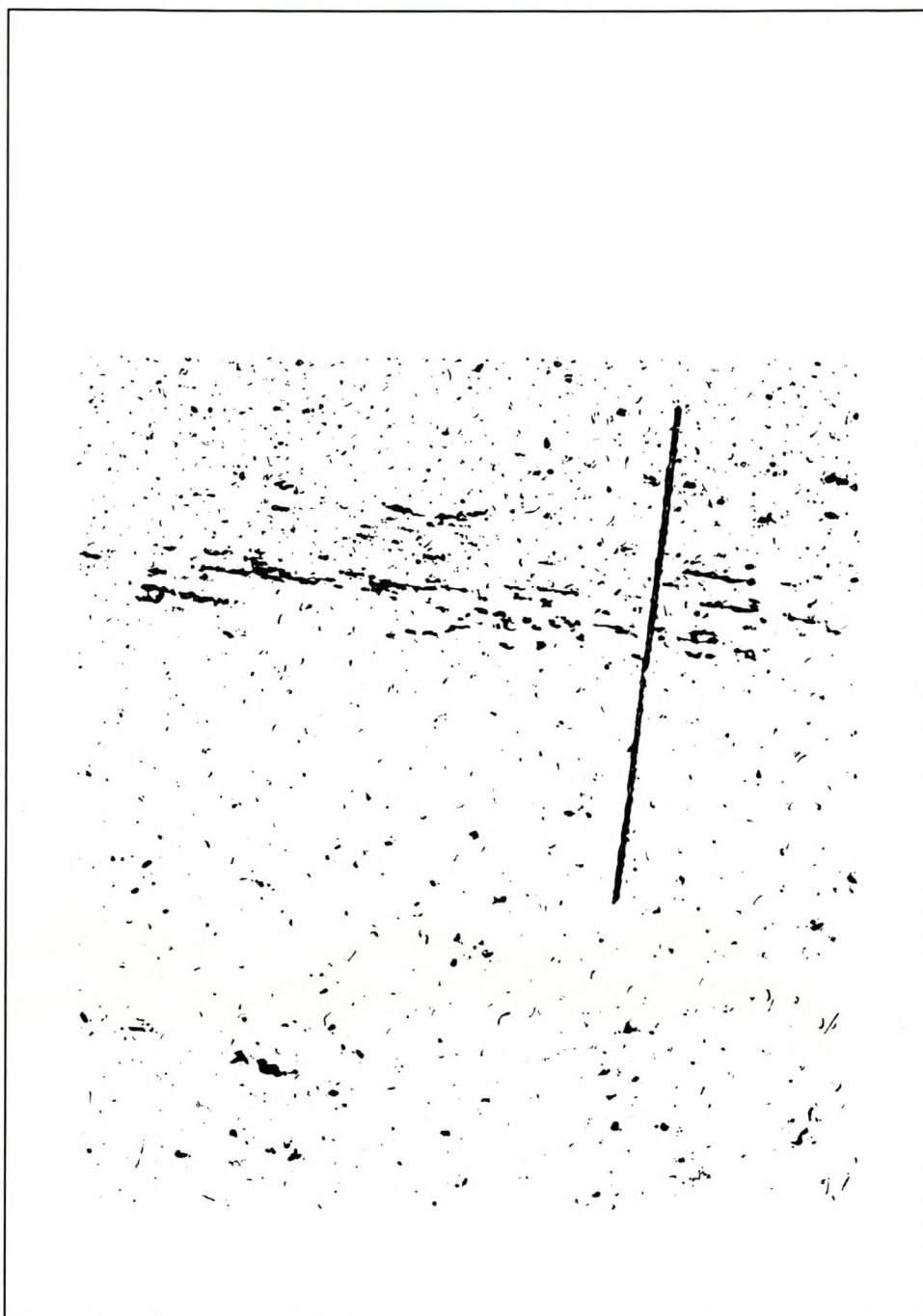
**Fig. 20. Mariëtte Ligthart, *Plek* (2002). Digital print, 8,7 x 21 cm.**





Cattle-post on the outskirts of a Karoo farm  
Beaufort West district, Western Cape Province.

**Fig. 21. Mariëtte Ligthart, *Plek* (2002). Digital print, 8,7 x 21 cm.**



**Fig. 22.** Mariëtte Ligthart, *Plek* (2002). Digital print, 29,7 x 21 cm.



SPEET SNIT OPENING SKEI ONTLOOT PENETREER SKEUR GLEUF BREUK SNI ONTBOIND KAL ONDEK INDRING BA  
RS HAAR VERNYDER WEGHAAL WOND VERDEEL KNP INSY GROEF LYN KEE HAAL LETSEL LITTEKEN SKEIDING SN  
ONTLOOT SNIT GLEUF KAL SPEET HAAR BARS INDRING KAL ONDEK KAP DEEL VERDEEL SKEIDING WOND VERDEE  
L SKEUR KAL GROEF LETSEL BARS WOND LITTEKEN WOND SKEI ONDEK SKEUR GLEUF GRENS SKEIDING VER  
DEEL GRENS WOND LITTEKEN SKEI WEGHAAL VERDEEL ONTBOIND KAP LETSEL KAL SNI SKEI BARS HAAR KAP  
KNP KEE STEK SNI LITTEKEN ONTLOOT PENETREER GLEUF BREUK BREEK INDRING HAAL BARS GROEF SKEET SN  
IT OPENING SKEI ONTLOOT PENETREER SKEUR GLEUF BREUK SNI ONTBOIND KAL ONDEK KNP INDRING BARS HAAR  
VERNHYDER WEGHAAL WOND VERDEEL KNP INSY GROEF LYN KEE HAAL LETSEL LITTEKEN SKEIDING SNI ONTBOIND  
SNI GLEUF KAL SPEET KAP DEEL VERDEEL KAP LETSEL KAL SNI SKEI BARS HAAR KAP KNP KEE STEK VERDEEL  
GRENS WOND LITTEKEN SKEI WEGHAAL ONTBOIND KAP LETSEL KAL SNI SKEI BARS HAAR KAP KNP KEE STEK VERDEEL  
SNI LITTEKEN ONTLOOT PENETREER GLEUF BREUK BREEK INDRING HAAR GRENS SKEUR SKEIDING SPEET SNIT OPENING SKEI  
ONTLOOT PENETREER INDRING BARS HAAR VERNHYDER WEGHAAL WOND VERDEEL KNP SNI SPEET BREUK GLEUF SKEUR PE  
NETREER SKEUR ONTLOOT ONTBOIND SKEI KAL SNIT HAAR BARS INDRING ONDEK KAL VERTEK TREK AFSEID ONTBOIND SKEI  
ET HAAL KEE LYN GROEF INSY KNP VERDEEL WOND WEGHAAL VERNHYDER SPEET KAL GLEUF SNIT ONTLOOT SNI SKEIDING  
LITTEKEN LETSEL HAAR ONDEK KAL INDRING BARS VERDEEL KAL SKEUR VERDEEL WOND SKEIDING DEEL GROEF LETSEL  
BREUK SPEET SNIT SNI OPENING SKEI ONTLOOT PENETREER SKEUR GLEUF BREUK LETSEL LITTEKEN SKEIDING SNI ONTLOOT  
SNI GLEUF KAL WOND VERDEEL BARS INDRING ONDEK VERTEK ONTBOIND KAL BREUK HAAL KEE LYN GROEF INSY KNP VER  
DEEL WOND WEGHAAL VERNHYDER LYN KEE SPEET KAP DEEL VERDEEL GRENS SNI KEE INSY KAL ONDEK INDRING  
SKEIDING LITTEKEN LETSEL WOND ONTLOOT GROEF SKEIDING LYN SNIT KEE HAAL SNI VERNHYDER INDRING KAP VERDEEL KAP GR  
ENS ONTLOOT BREUK ONTBOIND WEGHAAL WOND LYN GRENS BARS SKEUR PENETREER BREEK SKEIDING KAL HAAR INSY SPEET  
SNI OPENING SKEI ONTBOIND PENETREER SKEUR GLEUF BARS SNI ONTBOIND KAL ONDEK INDRING BARS HAAR VERNHYDER WEG  
HAAL WOND VERDEEL KNP INSY GROEF LYN KEE HAAL LETSEL LITTEKEN SKEIDING SNI ONTLOOT SNI GLEUF KAL SNI  
GLEUF KAL SPEET HAAR BARS INDRING KAL ONDEK KAP DEEL VERDEEL SKEIDING WOND VERDEEL SKEUR KAL GROEF  
LETSEL BARS WOND LITTEKEN WOND SKEI ONDEK SKEUR GLEUF GRENS SKEIDING VERDEEL GRENS WOND LITTEKEN SKEI WEG  
HAAL VERDEEL ONTBOIND KAP LETSEL KAL SNI SKEI BARS HAAR KAP KNP KEE STEK SNI LITTEKEN ONTLOOT SNI  
KEUR GLEUF BREUK BREEK INDRING HAAL GRENS GROEF SPEET SNIT OPENING SKEI ONTLOOT PENETREER SKEUR GLEUF  
BREUK SNI ONTBOIND KAL ONDEK KNP INDRING BARS HAAR VERNHYDER WEGHAAL WOND VERDEEL KNP INSY GROEF LYN  
KEE HAAL LETSEL LITTEKEN SKEIDING SNI ONTLOOT SNI GLEUF KAL SPEET KAP DEEL VERDEEL SKEIDING WOND  
VERDEEL SKEUR KAL GROEF GRENS SKEIDING VERDEEL GRENS WOND LITTEKEN SKEI WEGHAAL ONTBOIND KAP LETSEL KA  
AL SNI SKEI BARS HAAR KAP KNP KEE STEK VERDEEL SNI LITTEKEN ONTLOOT PENETREER GLEUF BREUK BREEK IN  
DRING SPEET SNIT OPENING SKEI ONTLOOT PENETREER SKEUR GLEUF BREUK SNI ONTBOIND KAL ONDEK INDRING BARS HAAR  
VERNHYDER WEGHAAL WOND VERDEEL KNP INSY GROEF LYN KEE HAAL LETSEL LITTEKEN SKEIDING SNI ONTLOOT SNI GLEUF  
F KAL SPEET HAAR BARS INDRING KAL ONDEK KAP DEEL VERDEEL SKEIDING WOND VERDEEL SKEUR KAL GROEF LET  
SEL BARS WOND LITTEKEN WOND SKEI ONDEK SKEUR GLEUF GRENS SKEIDING VERDEEL GRENS WOND LITTEKEN SKEI WEG  
HAAL VERDEEL ONTBOIND KAP LETSEL KAL SNI SKEI BARS HAAR KAP KNP KEE STEK SNI LITTEKEN ONTLOOT PENETREER  
GLEUF BREUK BREEK INDRING HAAR GRENS GROEF SPEET SNIT OPENING SKEI ONTLOOT PENETREER SKEUR GLEUF BREUK  
SNI ONTBOIND KAL ONDEK KNP INDRING BARS HAAR VERNHYDER WEGHAAL WOND VERDEEL KNP INSY GLEUF GROEF LYN  
KEE HAAL LETSEL LITTEKEN SKEIDING SNI TREK ONTLOOT SNI GLEUF KAL SPEET KAP DEEL VERDEEL SKEIDING W  
OND VERDEEL SKEUR KAL GROEF GRENS SKEIDING VERDEEL GRENS WOND LITTEKEN SKEI WEGHAAL ONTBOIND LITTEKEN  
KAL SKEI WEGHAAL LETSEL KAL SNI SKEI BARS HAAR KAP KNP KEE STEK VERNHYDER SNI LITTEKEN ONTLOOT SNI

SAMWOG HEEL BIND LAS NEG GENES VERBIND KOESTER SAMWOG HEEL BIND LAS NEG GENES VERBIND KOESTER

SPEET SNI ONTBOIND KAL ONDEK INDRING BARS HAAR VERNHYDER WEGHAAL WOND VERDEEL KNP INSY GR  
OEF LYN KEE HAAL LETSEL LITTEKEN SKEIDING SNI ONTLOOT SNI GLEUF KAL SPEET HAAR BARS INDRING KAL  
ONDEK KAP DEEL VERDEEL SKEIDING WOND VERDEEL SKEUR KAL GROEF LETSEL BARS WOND LITTEKEN WOND  
SKEI ONDEK SKEUR GLEUF GRENS SKEIDING VERDEEL GRENS WOND LITTEKEN SKEI WEGHAAL VERDEEL ONT  
BOIND KAP LETSEL KAL SNI SKEI BARS HAAR KAP KNP KEE STEK SNI LITTEKEN ONTLOOT PENETREER  
GLEUF BREUK BREEK INDRING HAAR GRENS GROEF SPEET SNIT OPENING SKEI ONTLOOT PENETREER SKEUR GLEUF  
BREUK SNI ONTBOIND KAL ONDEK KNP INDRING BARS HAAR VERNHYDER WEGHAAL WOND VERDEEL KNP INSY  
ROEF LYN KEE HAAL HAAR LETSEL LITTEKEN SKEIDING SNI ONTLOOT SNI GLEUF KAL SPEET KAP DEEL  
GLEUF KAL SPEET KAP DEEL VERDEEL SKEIDING WOND SEER VERDEEL SKEUR KAL GROEF GRENS VERDEEL SR  
EJ WOND LITTEKEN SKEI WEGHAAL ONTBOIND KAP LETSEL KAL SNI SKEI BARS HAAR KAP KNP KEE STEK  
LITTEKEN ONTLOOT PENETREER GLEUF BREUK BREEK INDRING HAAR GRENS SKEUR SKEIDING SPEET SNIT SKEI  
MORING BARS HAAR VERNHYDER WEGHAAL WOND VERDEEL KNP SNI SPEET BARS BREUK BARS HAAR VERNHYDER LETSEL  
HAAR BARS INDRING ONDEK KAL ONTBOIND SPEET HAAL KEE GROEF INSY LYN VERDEEL WOND LITTEKEN

Fig. 23. Mariëtte Ligthart, *Plek* (2002). Digital print, 29,7 x 21 cm.



**Fig. 24. Mariëtte Ligthart, *Plek* (2002). Digital print, 8,7 x 21 cm.**





**Fig. 25. Mariëtte Ligthart, *Plek* (2002). Digital print, 8,7 x 21 cm.**

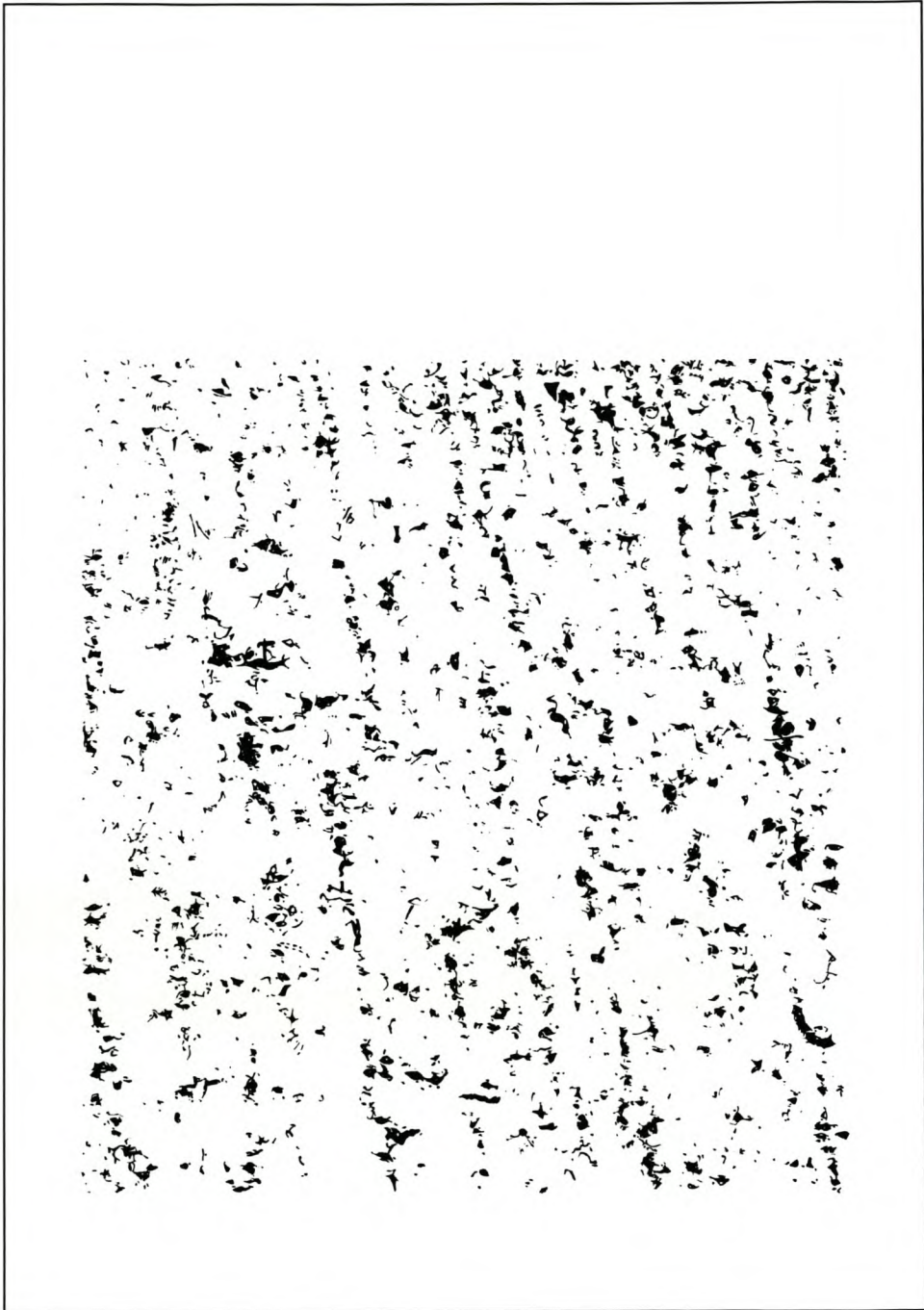


Fig. 26. Mariëtte Ligthart, *Plek* (2002). Digital print, 29,7 x 21 cm.



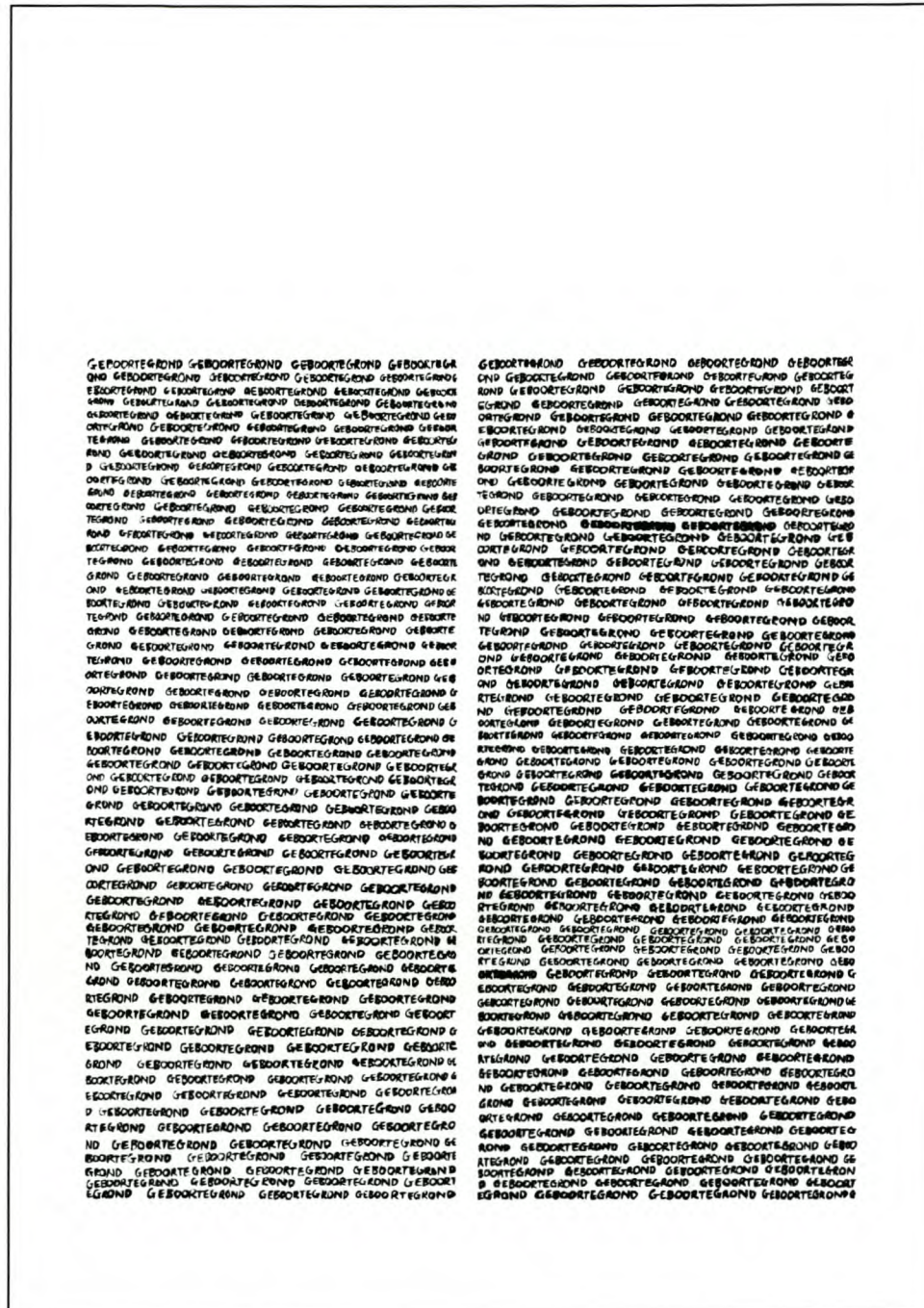
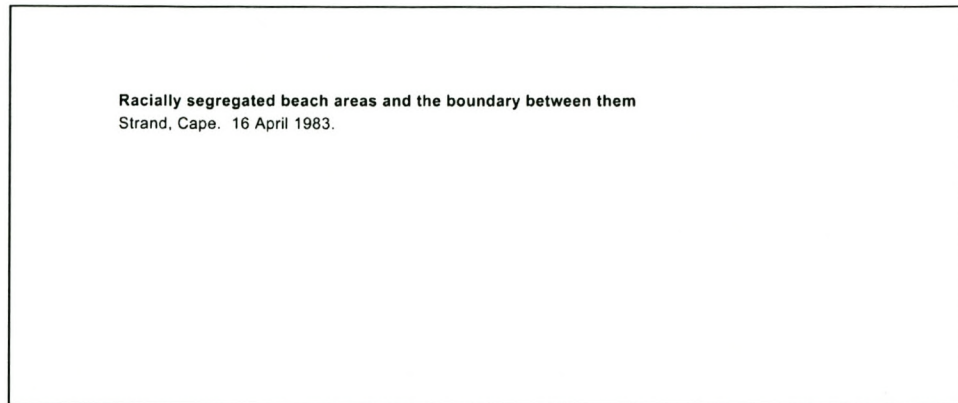


Fig. 27. Mariëtte Ligthart, *Plek* (2002). Digital print, 29,7 x 21 cm.



Fig. 28. Mariëtte Ligthart, *Plek* (2002). Digital print, 8,7 x 21 cm.





**Fig. 29. Mariëtte Ligthart, *Plek* (2002). Digital print, 8,7 x 21 cm.**

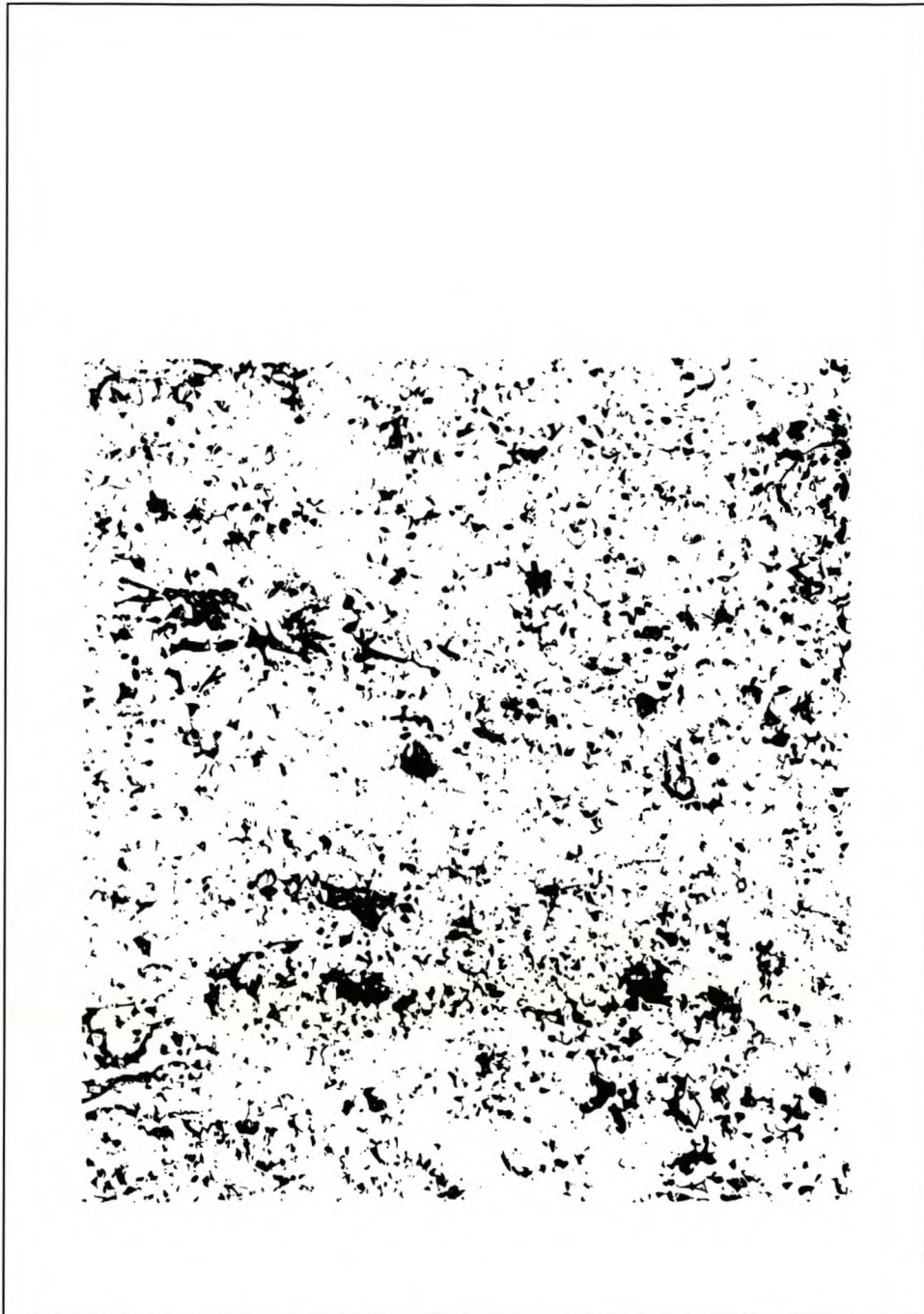


Fig. 30. Mariëtte Ligthart, *Plek* (2002). Digital print, 29,7 x 21 cm.



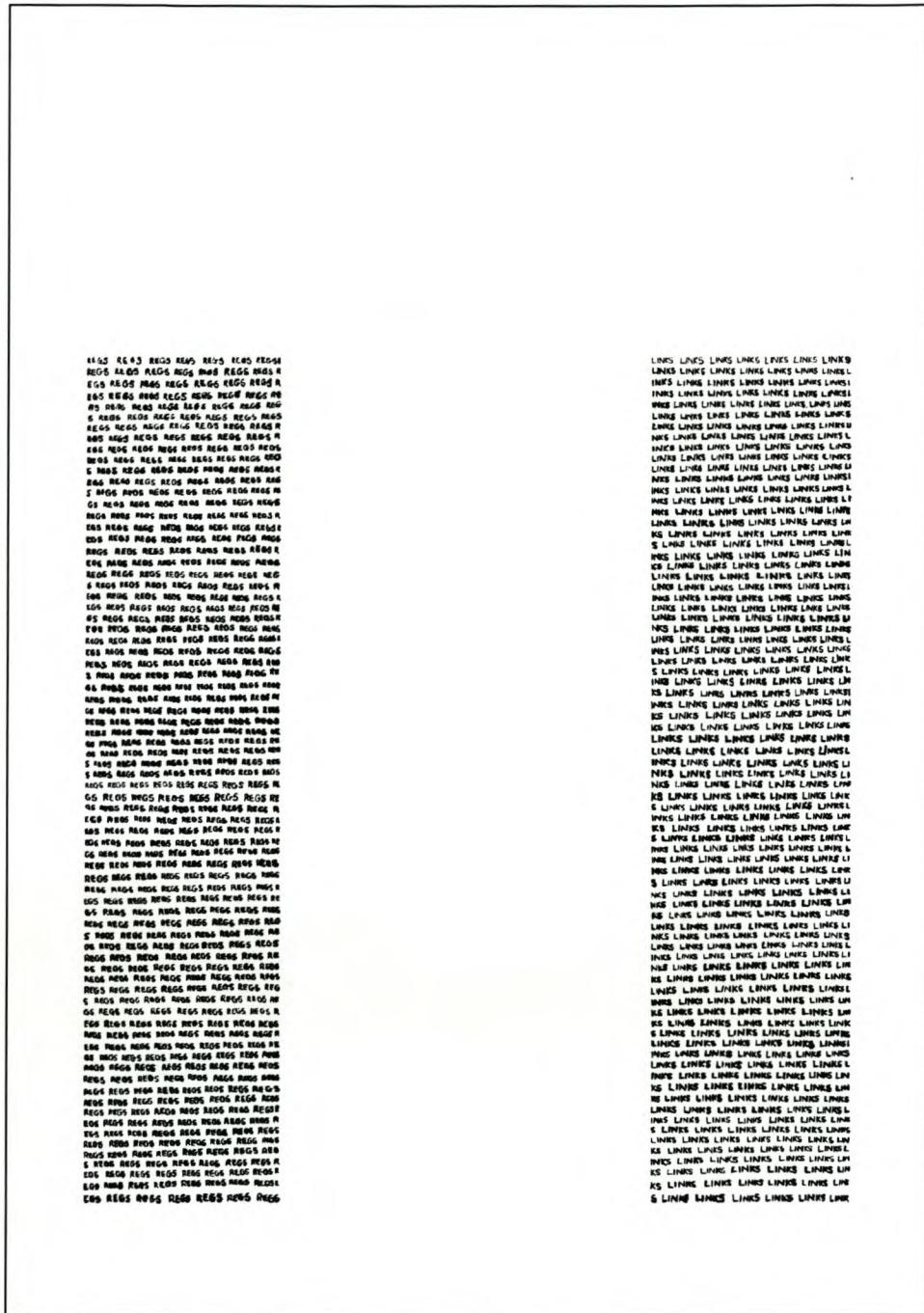
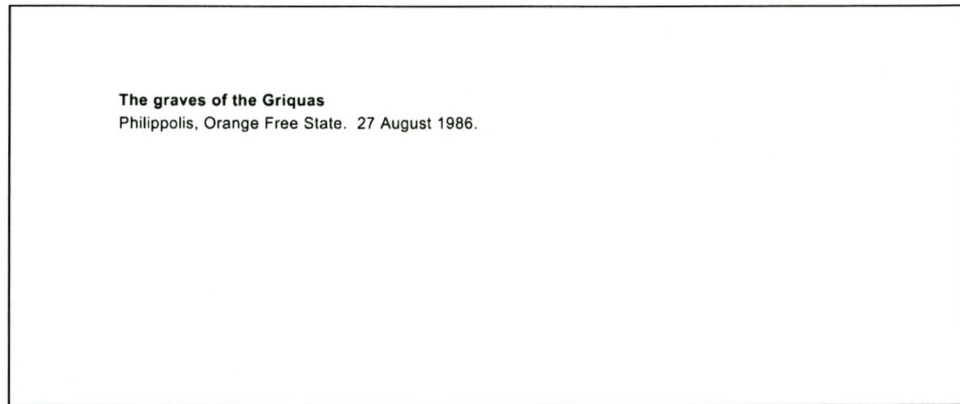


Fig. 31. Mariëtte Ligthart, *Plek* (2002). Digital print, 29,7 x 21 cm.



**Fig. 32. Mariëtte Ligthart, *Plek* (2002). Digital print, 8,7 x 21 cm.**





**Fig. 33. Mariëtte Ligthart, *Plek* (2002). Digital print, 8,7 x 21 cm.**

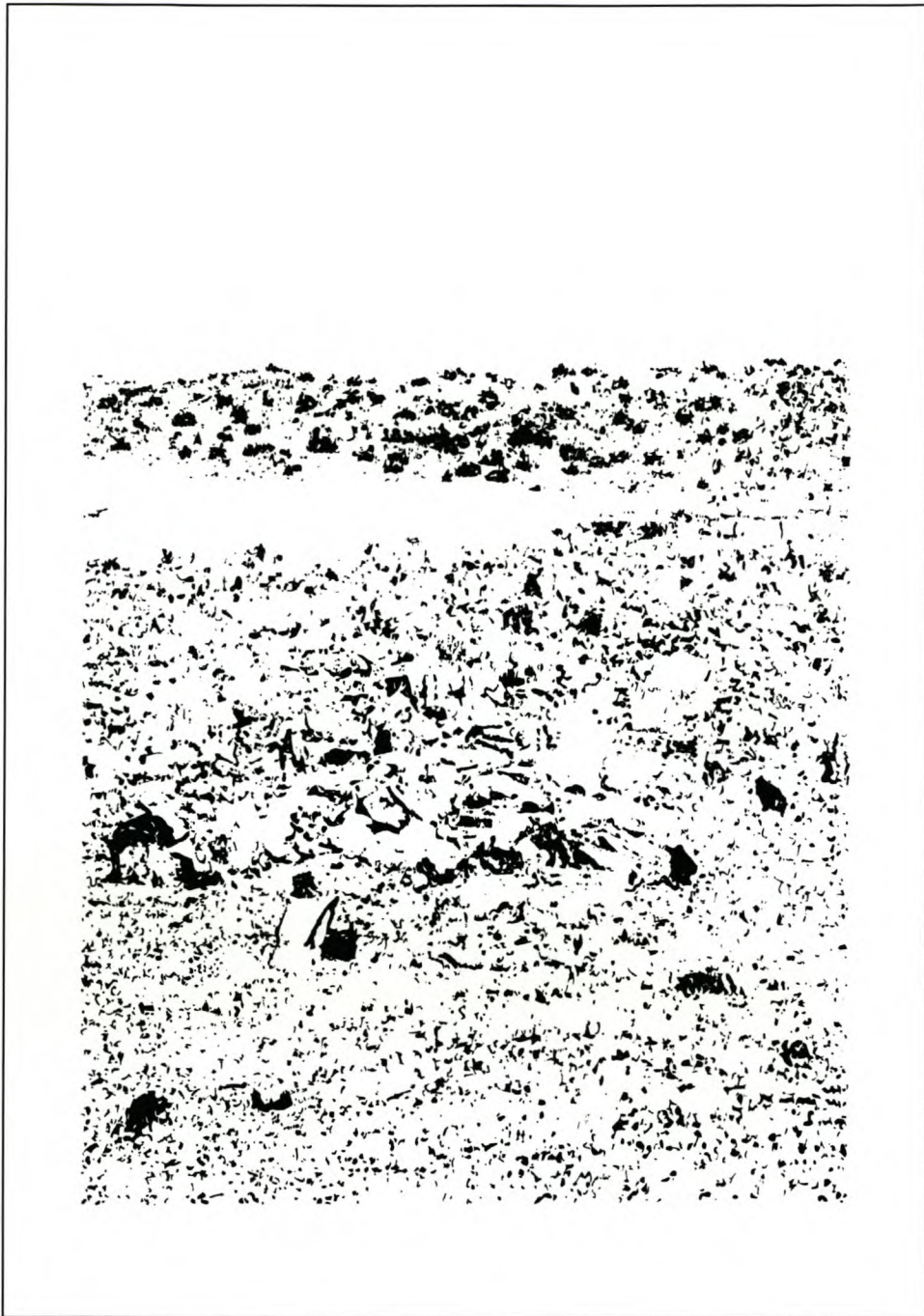


Fig. 34. Mariëtte Ligthart, *Plek* (2002). Digital print, 29,7 x 21 cm.

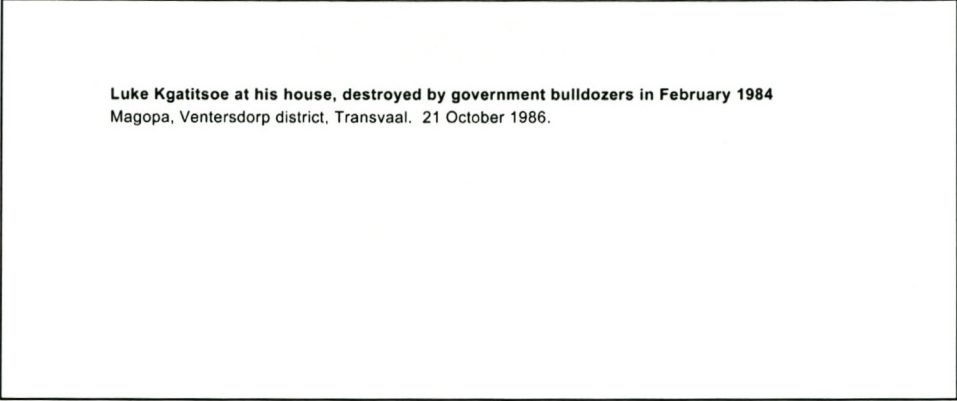


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**Fig. 36. Mariëtte Ligthart, *Plek* (2002). Digital print, 8,7 x 21 cm.**





Luke Kgatitsoe at his house, destroyed by government bulldozers in February 1984  
Magopa, Ventersdorp district, Transvaal. 21 October 1986.

**Fig. 37. Mariëtte Ligthart, *Plek* (2002). Digital print, 8,7 x 21 cm.**

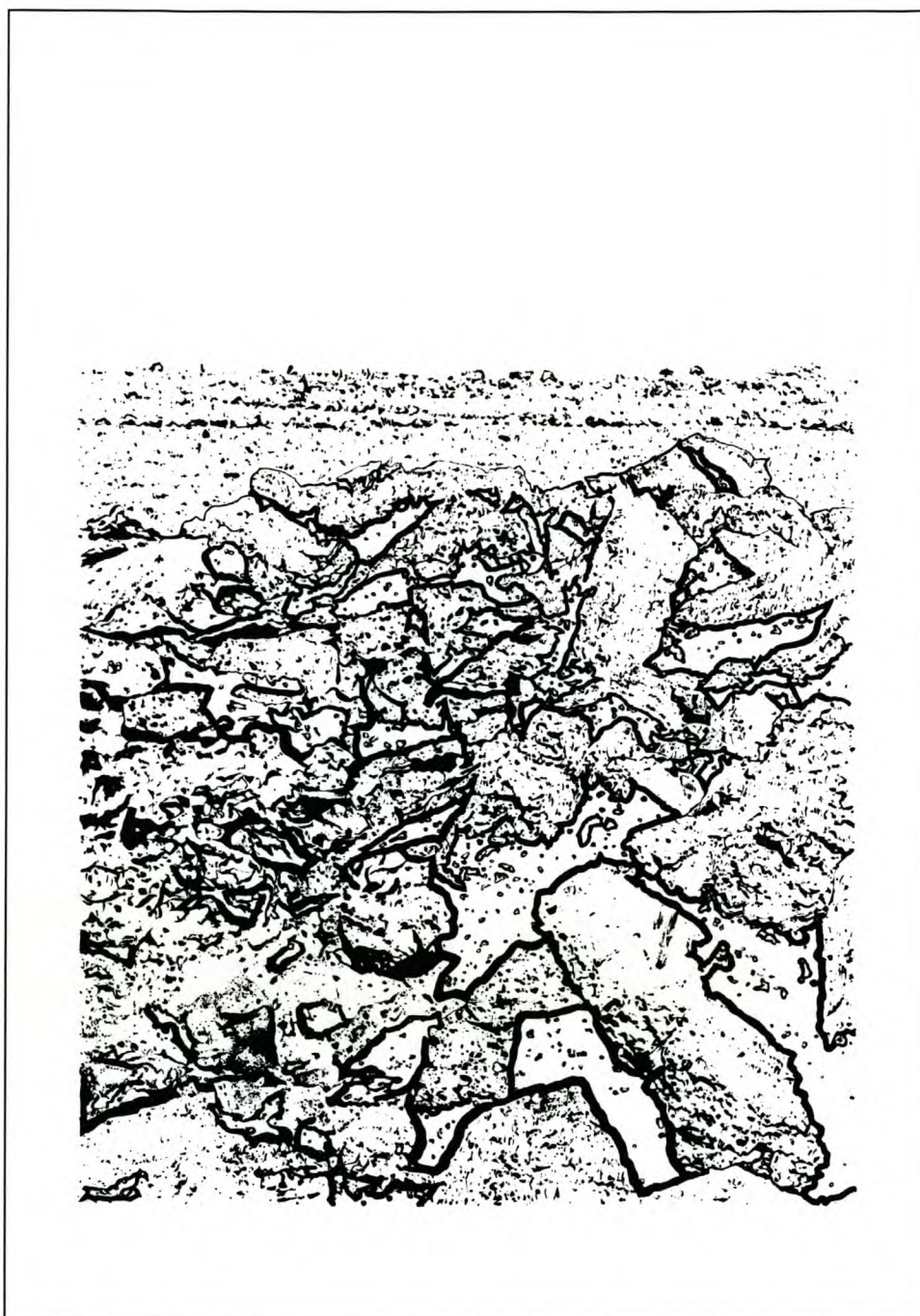


Fig. 38. Mariëtte Ligthart, *Plek* (2002). Digital print, 29,7 x 21 cm.



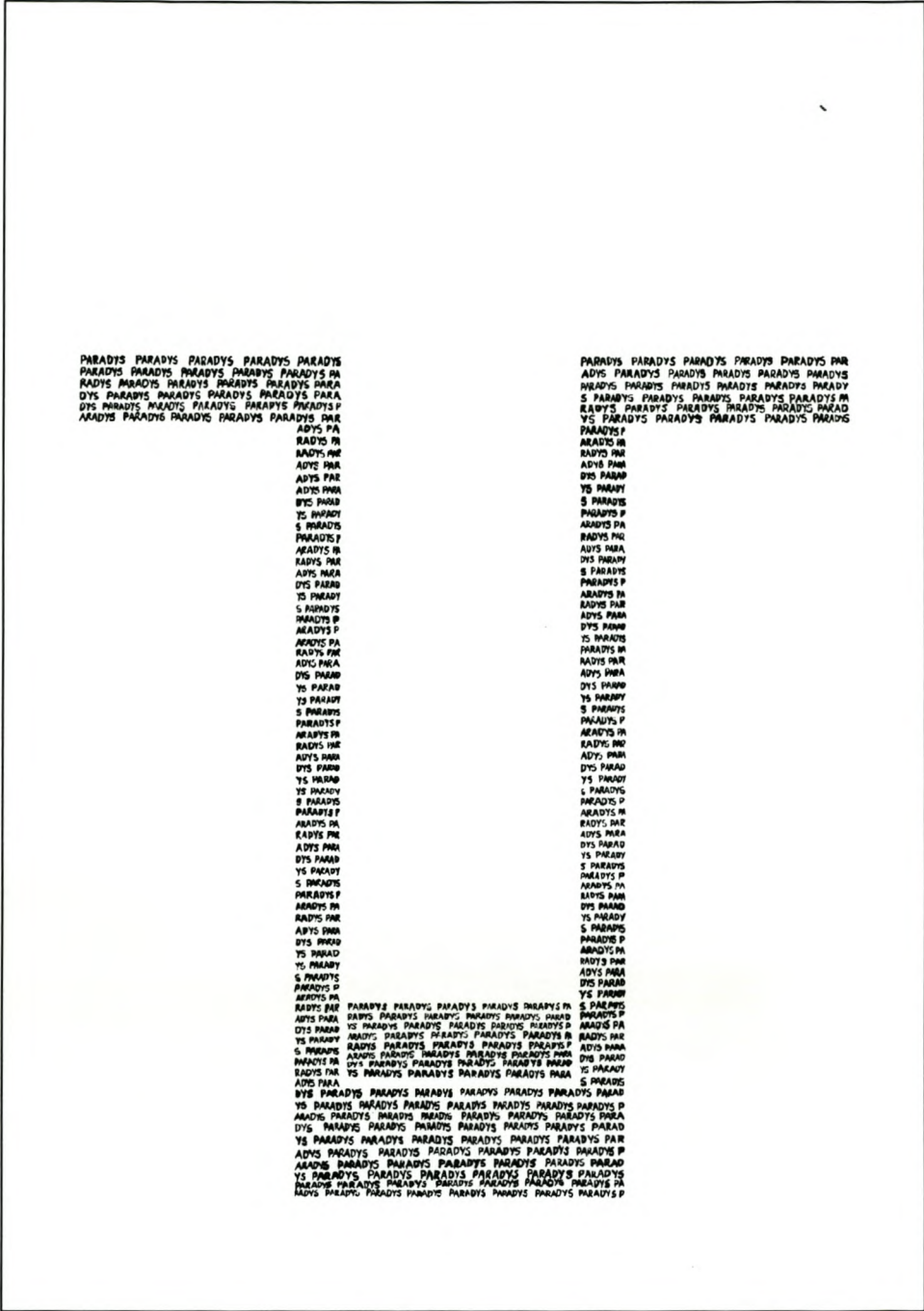
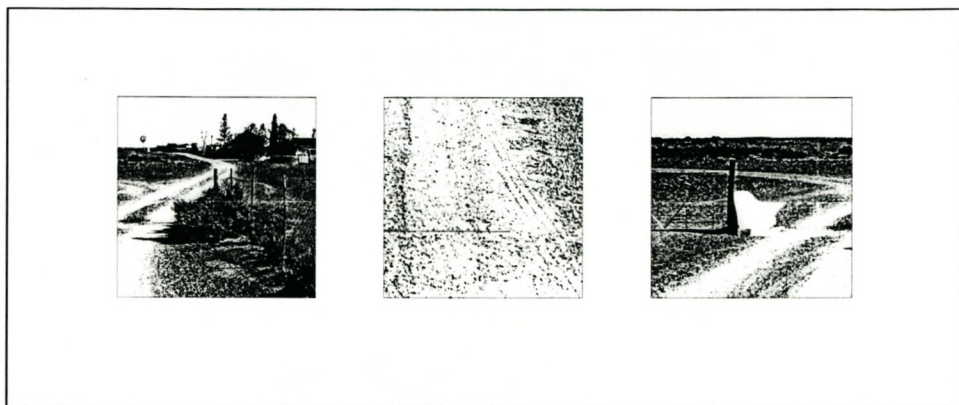
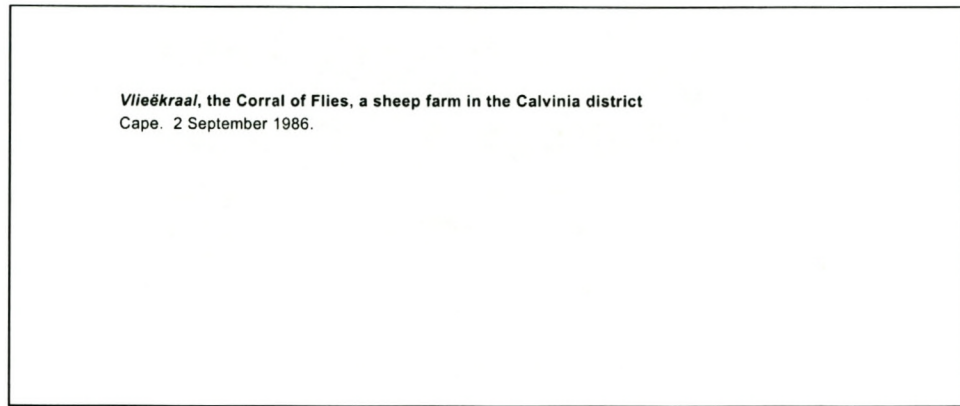


Fig. 39. Mariëtte Ligthart, *Plek* (2002). Digital print, 29,7 x 21 cm.



**Fig. 40. Mariëtte Ligthart, *Plek* (2002). Digital print, 8,7 x 21 cm.**





**Fig. 41. Mariëtte Ligthart, *Plek* (2002). Digital print, 8,7 x 21 cm.**

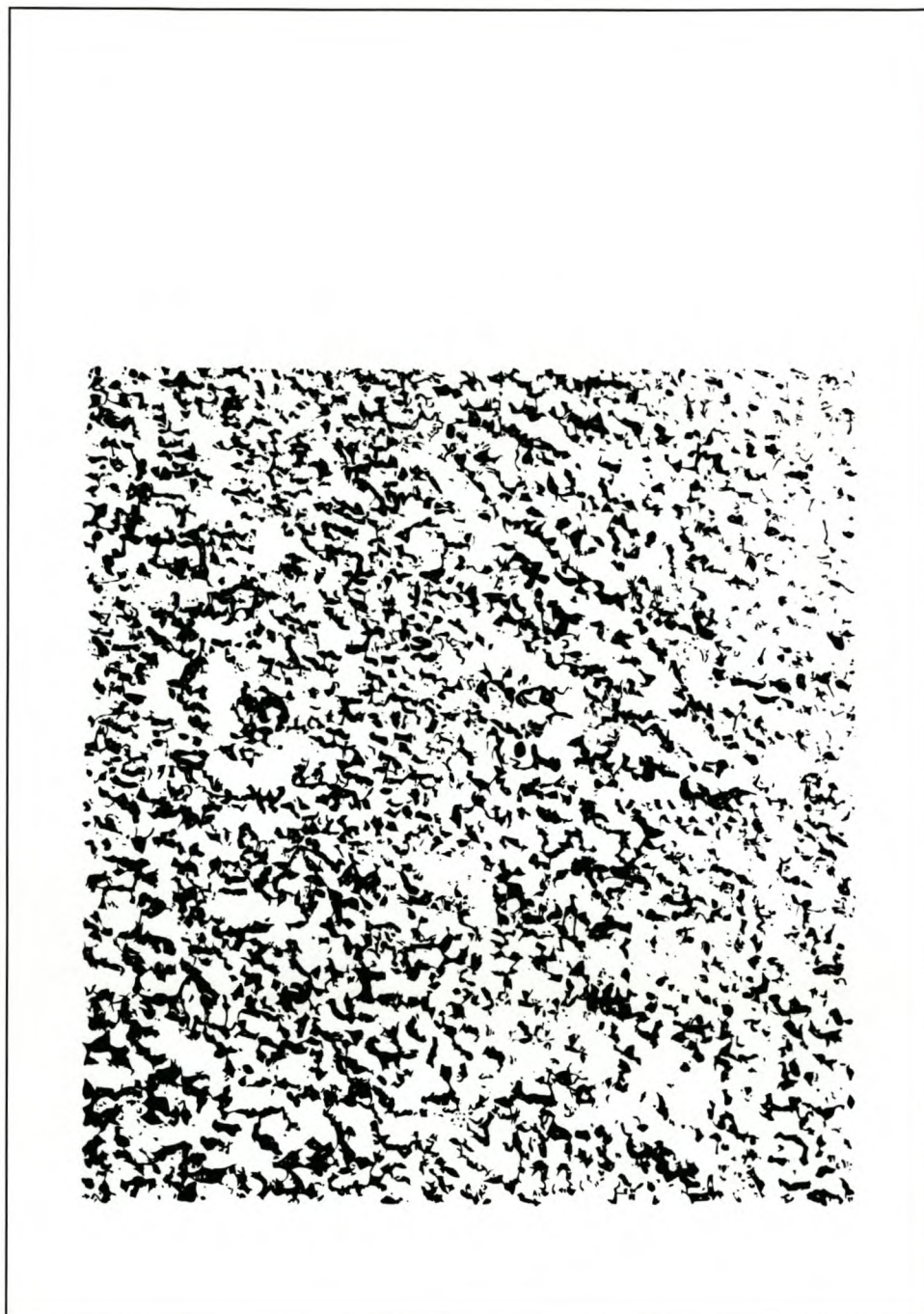


Fig. 42. Mariëtte Ligthart, *Plek* (2002). Digital print, 29,7 x 21 cm.



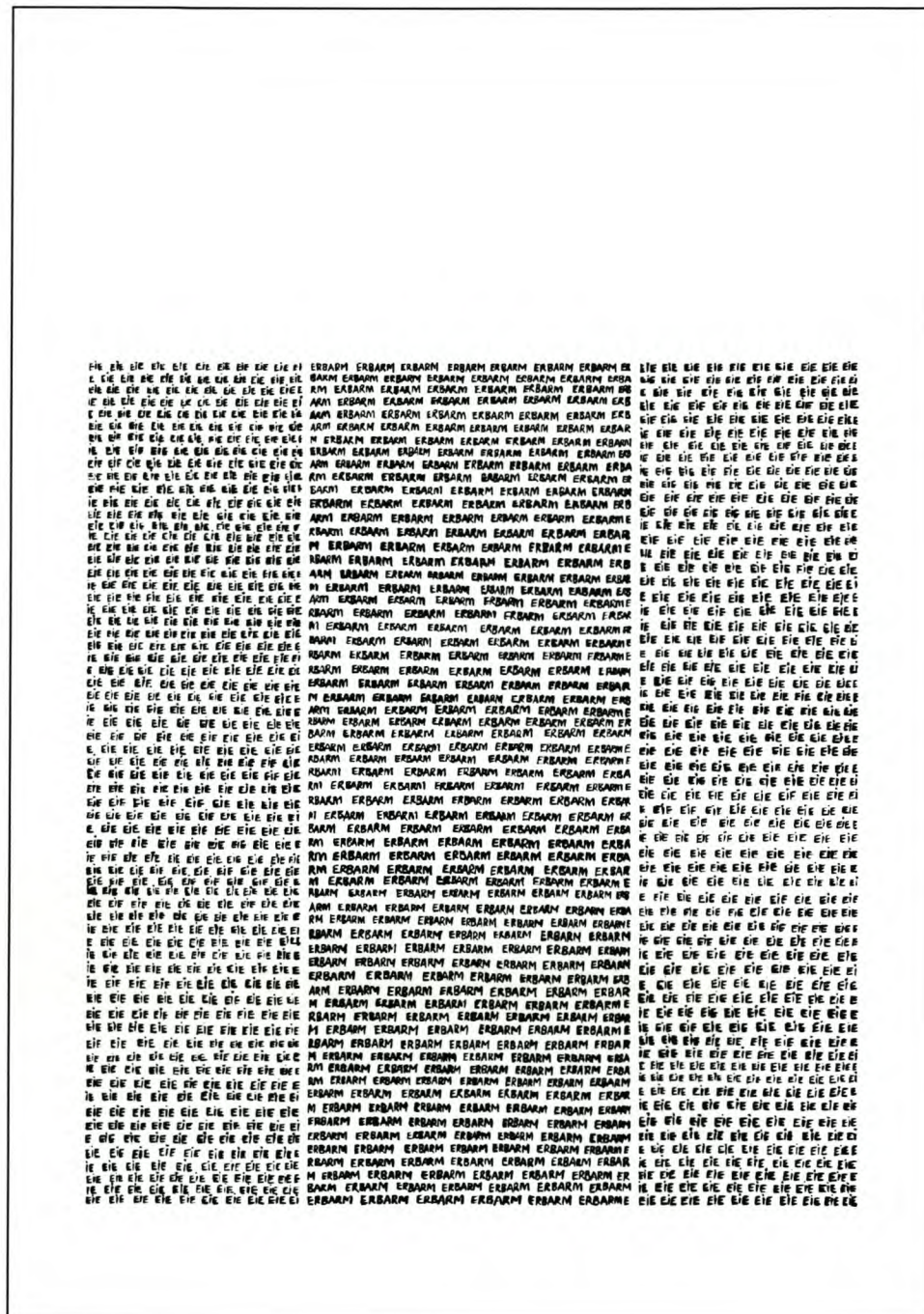


Fig. 43. Mariëtte Ligthart, *Plek* (2002). Digital print, 29,7 x 21 cm.



Fig. 44. Mariëtte Ligthart, *Terugbe[taal]* (2003). Drypoint, 15,5 x 11 cm.





**Fig. 45.** Mariëtte Ligthart, *Terugbe[taal]* (2003). Drypoint, 15,5 x 11 cm.



**Fig. 46. Mariëtte Ligthart, *Terugbe[taal]* (2003). Drypoint, 15,5 x 11 cm.**





**Fig. 47. Mariëtte Ligthart, *Terugbe[taal]* (2003). Drypoint, 15,5 x 11 cm.**



**Fig. 48.** Mariëtte Ligthart, *Terugbe[taal]* (2003). Drypoint, 15,5 x 11 cm.



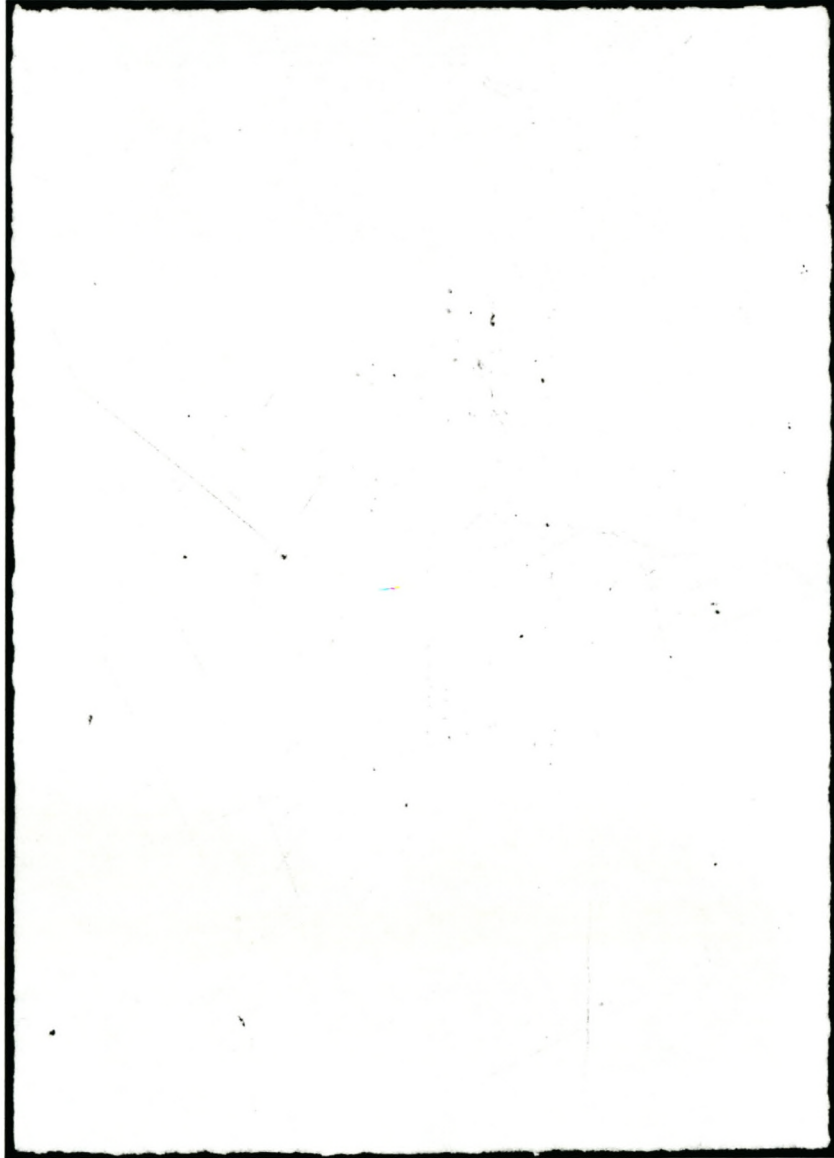


**Fig. 49. Mariëtte Ligthart, *Terugbe[taal]* (2003). Drypoint, 15,5 x 11 cm.**

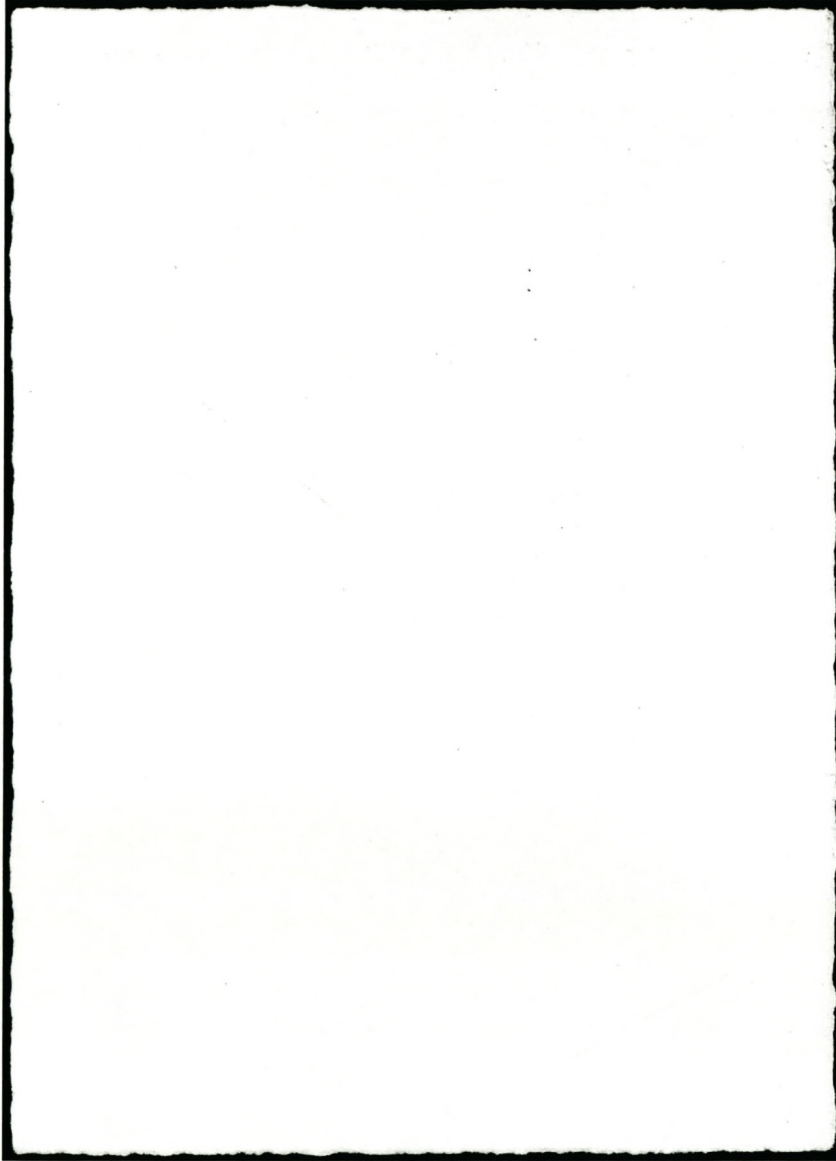


**Fig. 50.** Mariëtte Ligthart, *Terugbe[taal]* (2003). Drypoint, 15,5 x 11 cm.





**Fig. 51.** Mariëtte Ligthart, *Terugbe[taal]* (2003). Drypoint, 15,5 x 11 cm.



**Fig. 52.** Mariëtte Ligthart, *Terugbe[taal]* (2003). Drypoint, 15,5 x 11 cm.